
BRITAIN'S BIGGEST & BEST AMIGA GAMES MAG
THE ONE AMIGA
EXCLUSIVE! JOKER'S WILD! Meet Malcolm in the Kyrandia review!
STREET FIGHTER II
US Gold's Blockbusting Beat-'em up inside!
What, no disk? Ask the newsagent!
What, no disk? Ask the newsagent!
EXCLUSIVE! WING COMMANDER Reviewed Inside!
FREE INSIDE! Huge STREETFIGHTER & INDIANA JONES Poster!
OFF YER BIKE! EA's Road Rash test-ridden!
November 1992 £3.75
DM 20 Lire 12,000 Printed in the UK

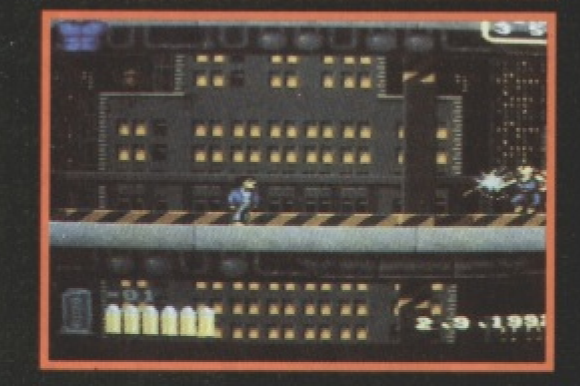

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WEAPON

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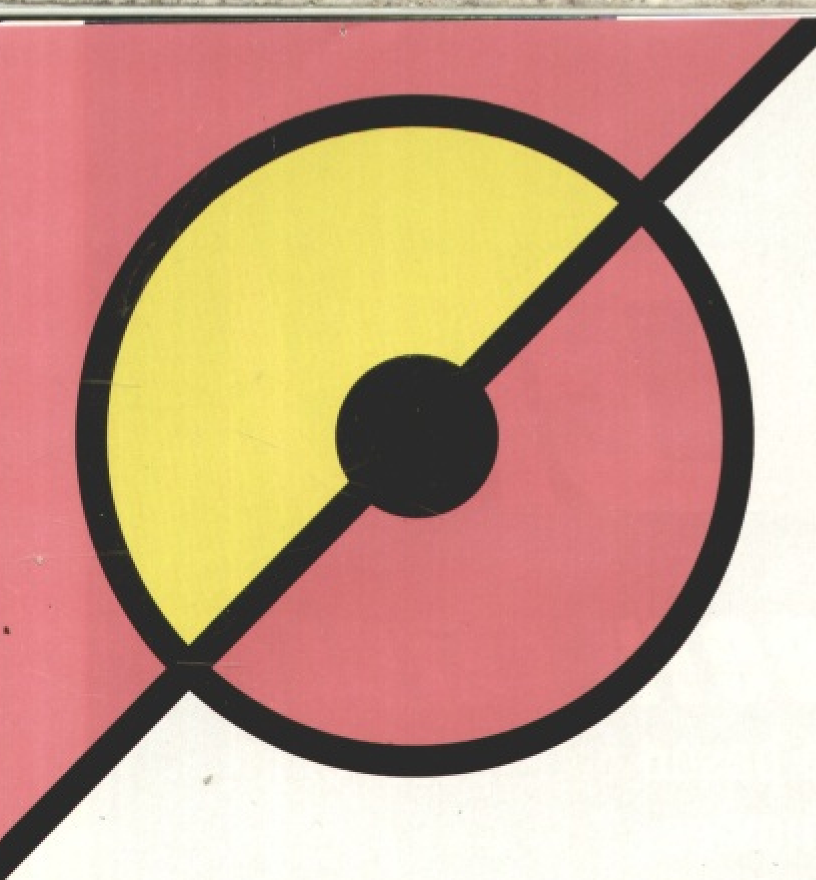
IT'S MEAN, FAST AND... LETHAL!







OCEAN SOFTWARE LTD . 2 CASTLE STREET, CASTLEFIELD, MANCHESTER M3 4LZ.



cont



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Telephone: 0858 410510
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The One is produced with Apple Macintosh Desktop Publishing, using Quark Express, Adobe Illustrator, Theatrics, Adobe Photoshop and a host of others. Film output by Team, 105-109 Oxford Street, London W1, and PrePress, 124-132 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1R. Printed by Capricorn.

Coverdisks compiled by Grants Computing.

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After so many years languishing in the 'Where are they now?' file, isometric-3D games are back - and with a vengeance. Core Design's latest is leading the attack...

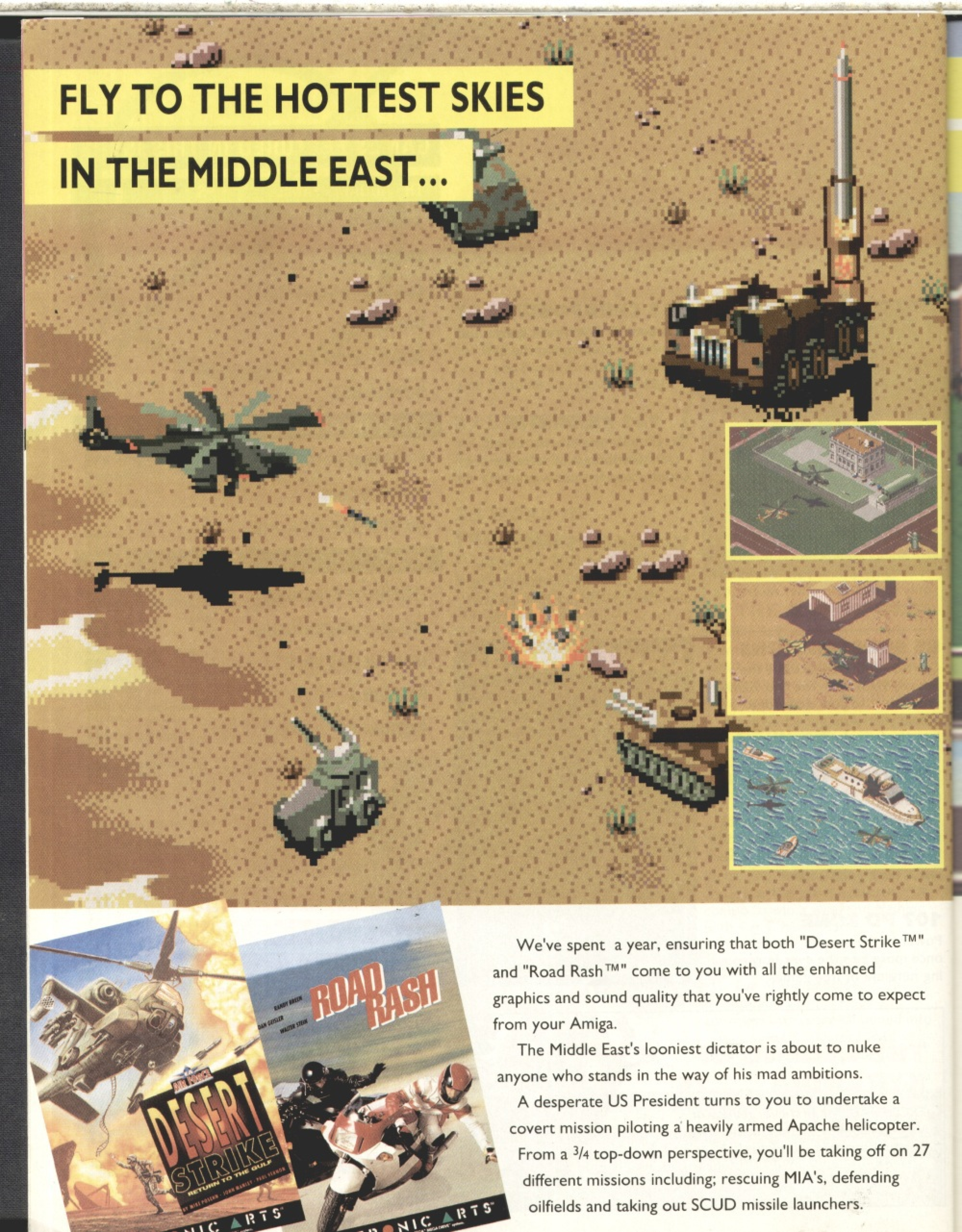


THE LEGEND OF KYRANDIA 76

EXCLUSIVE! The first ever review of Virgin's Monkey Island 2 beater! We don't mess about, you know.



GAMES FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE



FLY TO THE HOTTEST SKIES
IN THE MIDDLE EAST...
DESERT STRIKE
RETURN TO THE GULF
ROAD RASH
We've spent a year, ensuring that both "Desert Strike™" and "Road Rash™" come to you with all the enhanced graphics and sound quality that you've rightly come to expect from your Amiga.
The Middle East's looniest dictator is about to nuke anyone who stands in the way of his mad ambitions.
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From a 3/4 top-down perspective, you'll be taking off on 27 different missions including; rescuing MIA's, defending oilfields and taking out SCUD missile launchers.

...AND ALONG THE HOTTEST TARMAC IN THE WILD WEST.



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Whether you yearn for the undying gratitude of the entire Western World or the grudging respect of Helldog the club wielding gypsy biker, these two fun-packed hits are at last yours.

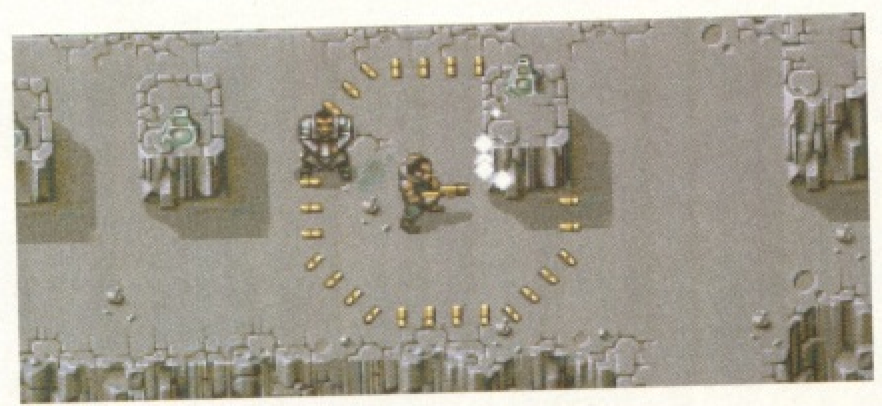
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BOOT SECTOR





THE CHAOS ENGINE
Renegade (1Mb only)

The Bitmap Brothers have been awfully quiet recently. The reason? Why, they've been hunched over their keyboards for the past two years beavering away on The Chaos Engine, a game which will, they hope, send them to the top of the software charts yet again. On offer for you this month is a complete and fully-playable level from the Bros' latest which should keep you well satisfied until the game is released in the near future.

PLAYING THE DEMO
The demo will load and launch into a rolling-demo showing off some of the pretty character selection screen graphics if you leave it alone. However, tapping FIRE or ESCAPE will present you with the options screen. One or two players can participate in the action and once this decision has been made it's into the game proper. If you have opted for the one-player game, you'll notice that the other character is computer controlled so either way you'll be playing with a colleague.

The characters are moved in the usual way (for the thick that means moving the joystick in the directions you want him to travel) and pressing FIRE will, er, fire your weapon. The object of this level is to turn on all three nodes (the grey pillars) which in turn will open the exit. Nodes are activated by shooting them (which will make them illuminate) and a computer voice will confirm your actions.

There are a number of special weapon tokens which can be collected by either player and will affect both players differently. Both players have different special abilities which can be used at any time during the game. Player One (the Brigand) can produce a spectacular shot-burst effect which should wipe out most enemies on the screen. Player Two (the Gentleman) has the ability to call up a map of the surrounding area. These special powers are activated by holding down the FIRE button, and the number of times you can do this is shown on the panel at the bottom of the screen which will deplete every time you operate your ability. Collecting the little black bottles scattered around the landscape will increase the number of times you can perform your special trick.

There are also keys dotted around the landscape. Silver keys are vital to progression and must be collected to open other parts of the level. The gold keys, however, open secret rooms and bonus sections which contain a number of collectables. If you do become stuck, though, you can try shooting at the rocks and pillars as this can sometimes open up other areas.

The 'Ying-Yang' tokens store the party's status when they are collected. When both party members die they are restored to where the last token was picked-up. If one player dies he must wait until the next token is found before he can resume play.

So there you have it, an entire level packed full with features and effects. The final version will contain a choice of six characters, each with their own advantages and disadvantages and, of course, a load more levels to blast and puzzle your way through. Can you wait?





After the three disk bonanza that was October we've returned to the usual two but they're both packed full with excellent demos and Public Domain software. We're committed to bringing you the best value for money that Amiga Games Mags can offer - why pay for a measly one disk when you can have an infinitely better time with two. Simon Byron guides you through the wonders of this month's selection

LOADING YOUR DISKS

(1) Both disks contain some of the highest quality software ever to appear on a coverdisk so choosing between them is going to be difficult. You could either toss a coin, mix them about or just pick one out of a bag or something but, believe us, there's going to be a lot of hard decision making before you choose which disk to play first.

(2) Insert the selected disk into the drive slot on your Amiga.

(3) Turn on your Amiga.

(4) A menu will appear from which selection is made by pressing the appropriate function key or clicking on the name with the mouse pointer.

(5) When you've finished playing your way through both the disks it'd probably be best if you have a shower or - at the very least - a wash, because four weeks of solid gaming really will make you sweat.

ATTENTION A600HD OWNERS! Due to the extreme amount of memory required by the Lionheart demo, you may experience a few problems loading it straight from the boot menu.

If Lionheart fails to load, turn off your computer (but leave the disk in the drive) and reboot whilst holding down BOTH mouse buttons. A menu should appear - click on the 'Advanced Options...' icon at the bottom of the screen. A new screen should appear listing all the drives. Click on the 'Enabled' icons (they should now read 'Disabled') next to all the drive names EXCEPT DF0's. Now click on the 'USE' icon and then on the 'DF0' icon. Finally insert your disk and everything should be dandy. If you make a mistake just reset the machine and try again.

Sorry about the hassle but we think you'll agree it's worth it.

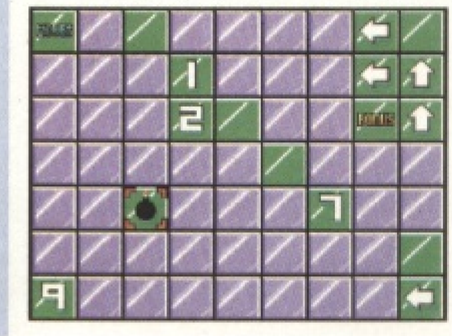
FLAG CATCHER

(1Mb only)

Described by Dave Upchurch as "well worth a look" in last month's PD Zone, we've included it on the disk so that you can do just that. The object of the game is to find the flag before you run out of 'moves'. The fewer moves you take to find the flag the more bonus points you get at the end of the level. Move the cursor around the screen using the joystick and press FIRE when you've decided on a square to try. One of the following five things should now appear:

- A flag - hooray! If this happens then the level is complete and you'll move on to the next, tougher screen.
- A bonus square which will give you extra points or moves.
- An arrow indicating that the flag is somewhere in that direction, although not necessarily on the same 'line' as the arrow.
- A number meaning that the flag is that many squares away, moving horizontally and/or vertically
- A bomb causing the screen to clear, losing all the clues that you'd previously built up.

Every time you select a square your 'moves' will be depleted and if you run out then the game is over. Before each level you'll be shown a screen depicting the amount of each of the five different squares on the next level so that you'll know exactly what hazards you're up against. Enjoy!







BIPLANES

This is a fantastic little game that is bound to keep you entertained for years, if not decades. It's an air combat game and the basic idea is to obtain fifteen points before your opponent does by. Points are achieved by either shooting the balloons that drift gracefully up from the middle of the screen or by downing the opposing biplane.

When the game first loads you will be presented with a set of options which are selected by moving the joystick left or right. You can play against a friend or the computer (and if you choose the computer there is a choice of difficulty levels), automatic acceleration and fake or real stereo (whatever that may be). Once these have been set it's off to the battleground.

The first thing you need to do before you can perform any gravity-defying acrobatics is accelerate to a certain speed fast enough to allow take-off. If you've chosen automatic acceleration just push the joystick UP to start the run-up. If you're on manual acceleration you'll need to hold the joystick UP at all times. Leaving the ground is as simple as, er, flying a plane. Just move the joystick LEFT or RIGHT, depending on which way you wish to rotate the plane and Bob's your uncle - you should then be in the skies. If you haven't reached a successful speed you'll find yourself desperately clinging to the air before crashing and it'll be a point to your opponent. You can shoot a maximum of two bullets at a time by pressing the FIRE button.

The plane behaves exactly like a real machine - if you point yourself vertically up you'll stall before too long. If this does happens you'll need to point the nose at the ground and push UP to build up your acceleration again and just before you hit the ground, move the joystick LEFT or RIGHT depending on which way you wish to fly. If you've performed all those actions correctly you should find yourself flying peacefully once again. It's all easier to do than it is to explain but by now you should get the idea and before too long you'll be looping and soaring amongst the clouds with the best of them.

TANK ATTACK

(1Mb only)

Here's some frantic two-player action based loosely on the old Atari VCS Combat cartridge. The object of the game is, quite simply, to blast your opponent before he blasts you. Movement is achieved by moving the joystick in the direction you wish to travel and blasting by pressing the FIRE button. The various walls can be used as hiding places or, more sneakily, for rebounding bullets off of. At first you'll be able to fire a large number of bullets at one time but as the game progresses your gun will take time to replenish so it's often best to leave a short time between firing sessions. The energy of each player is displayed at the top of the screen and when a tank reaches 0% it explodes.

During the game a number of special tokens will pop up which

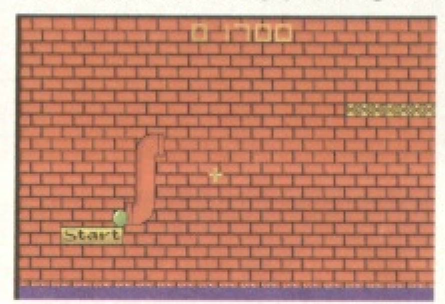


BRIDGE BALL

An unusual little game, this, but one worthy of inclusion as it provides many hours of top quality puzzle entertainment. The object of the game is to guide the ball from the starting point to the large expanse to the right of the screen. This is performed by placing platforms next to each other to form a bridge to the exit.

Using the mouse you can pick up the platforms (by pressing the LEFT mouse button) that are already in the level and, with the button still pressed, guide it to the position you require and release the button. You can only move the platforms a set number of times and this amount will be displayed when you pick it up.

There are a number of different tiles, each requiring a different tactic. Ordinary platforms can be placed next to or below other tiles, pipes raise the ball, tunnels need to be placed so that the ball rolls 'into' the entrance and fixed tiles cannot be moved at all so the ball needs to be guided onto them to take advantage of their ball-carrying properties. If the sphere falls into the water then the level is over and you'll have to restart.



have different effects when collected (such as making you invisible or invincible). These properties will become apparent on collection but you should take advantage of them quickly as they soon wear off. Up to four players can participate at one time and the various options are selectable from the title screen.

That's all there is to it. Have fun and try to remain friends.

ARRRGGGHHH!!!!

If you've removed all your peripherals and the disk still won't load then - hey! - it happens to the best of us, and we're really sorry, etc, but you've obviously been unfortunate enough to have received a faulty disk. The best thing to do is pop it in an envelope along with an SAE to the value of 28p and send it to -

The One Coverdisk Returns,
PC Wise,
Dowlais Top Business Park,
Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil,
Mid Glamorgan CF48 2YY.

and within a few days a working copy should appear through your letterbox and the games can begin. If you think your problem is solvable over the phone then you can call the PC Wise Helpline on (0685) 350505 between 10.30 am and 12.30 pm on weekdays.



LIONHEART

Thalion (1Mb only)

Yes, we're fed up as well with demos that only offer you thirty seconds of play and a real feeling of disappointment at the end of it. This EXCLUSIVE and BLOODY HUGE demo will certainly keep you engrossed for several hours before you manage to complete it (in fact, I'm the only member of The One's team that has managed to do this yet, brag, brag, brag).

THE GAME

Lionheart is a scrolling beat-'em-up along the same lines as Shadow Of The Beast except underneath all the undeniably beautiful graphics there's a real stormer of a game. The object of this demo is to reach the cave entrance hidden amongst all the nasties and treacherous platforms, collecting as many spinning crystals as you can along the way. As well as the usual running and jumping the character can perform a number of fighting moves, activated by moving the joystick in any direction and pressing FIRE.

The two best ones we've found are joystick DOWN and FIRE whilst in the air (which produces a fantastic downward lunging move - just the job for getting rid of any creatures that you're currently leaping over) and pressing FIRE and moving the joystick in the opposite direction to which you are facing (which will perform a spectacular roundhouse swing with the sword - handy for disposing of any beasties that are stood behind you).

During your time at holiday camp Lionheart you'll come across a number of spinning platforms which cannot be traversed whilst in motion. The best way to over come this is to give them a bloody great whack with your sword or foot which will stabilise them for a few seconds allowing you to leap on and off them before they start revolving again. Be wary of the numerous areas of spikes and deadly plants as they'll send you back to the start of the level quicker than you can say "Morning Campers".

If you reach one of the two rope sections in the demo, pressing UP will cause you to grasp hold of the line and the usual direction movements will then apply, including just a simple FIRE to swing your sword in the direction you're facing.

The final version will contain a number of sound effects, end-of-level Guardians and a number of restart points in each level - this one unfortunately slings you straight back to the start! And that's it, really, I think you'll agree that it's a HUGE demo and we all can't wait for the full game which should be arriving at a cinema near you very soon.

LIONHEART COMPO

We've teamed up with Thalion to offer you the chance to win your very own copy of Lionheart - simply by playing the demo! To stand a chance of winning one of the ten copies we have up for grabs you'll need to prove your game-playing skills. We want you to complete the demo and write down the last line of text that appears before the demo restarts. Once you have successfully obtained this information, plop it on a postcard or the back of a stuck down envelope and send it to: I CAN PLAY LIONHEART AS WELL AS SIMES, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. The first ten correct entries we receive will receive a copy of Lionheart when it's fully finished. Good luck!







REVOLUTION

(1Mb only)

Our final offering this month is a clever little puzzle game which will appeal to everyone from beat-'em-up fanatics to flight sim gurus. The object of each level is to collect all the batteries and warp to the next level. Batteries can only be collected whilst at least one of the blue-framed Cubes is 'charged'.

Controlling the white ball using the joystick, the Cubes can be charged by 'bouncing' into them. Once hit the Cubes fill up with green charge which depletes rapidly. Batteries can then be collected by bumping into them and once the level has been cleared of all batteries the warp to the next challenge is activated by charging both Cubes at the same time.

This may all sound a trifle easy but there are numerous traps and tricks. Many squares contain an arrow which will, when landed on, send you in that direction. Most of the time the arrows are clustered together, meaning that if you land on one you'll be transported quite a distance before control is handed back to you. Other squares have a circle in the middle which acts as a sort of magnet, slowing you down.

If this wasn't enough there are also aerials which drain your power if touched so avoid them as once all your power has gone you lose a life. The time limits are particularly tight making for a challenging game right from Level One.

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Inspired by James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis, Sim Earth looks at the world as one interrelated living organism offering you the ultimate experience in planet management. Design and nurture planets from their creation through the evolution of life to the development of intelligence and technology that can reach for the stars.

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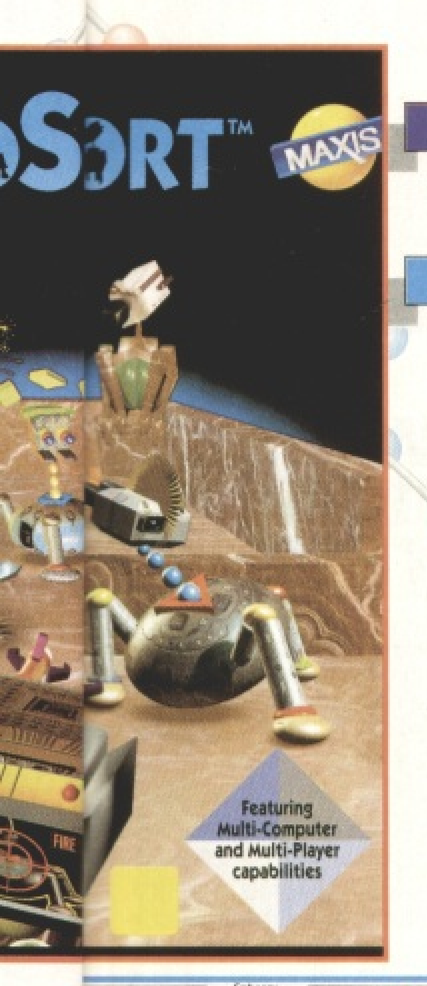
ROBOS

Armed with bombs, bullets, missiles, grenades and mor you control teams of Robots that compete in five differe sports: Survival, Treasure Hunt, Capture the Flag, Hostage an Baseball. By combining the tactical challenge of chess wi the intensity of guerrilla warfare, RoboSport provokes tot strategic mayhem.



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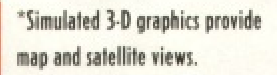
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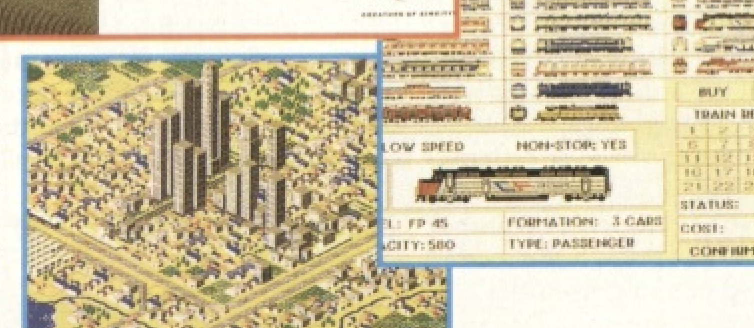
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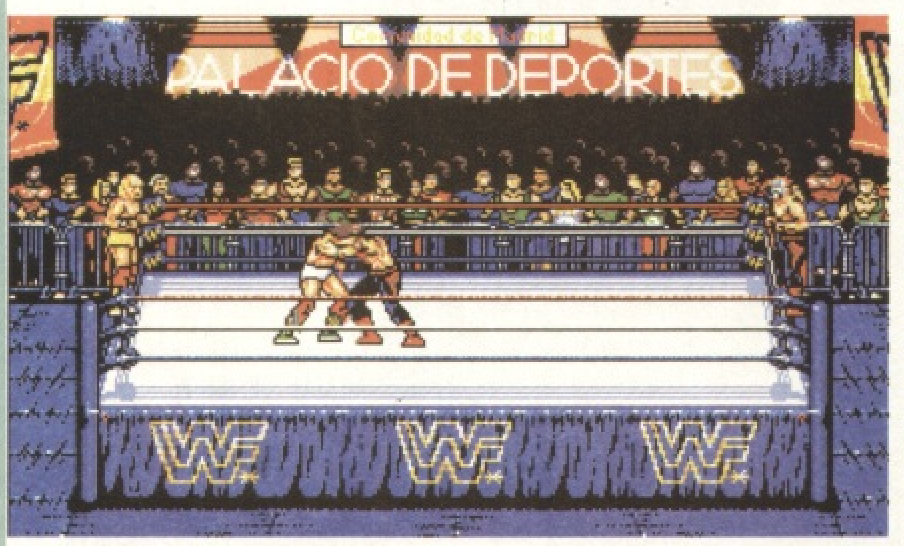


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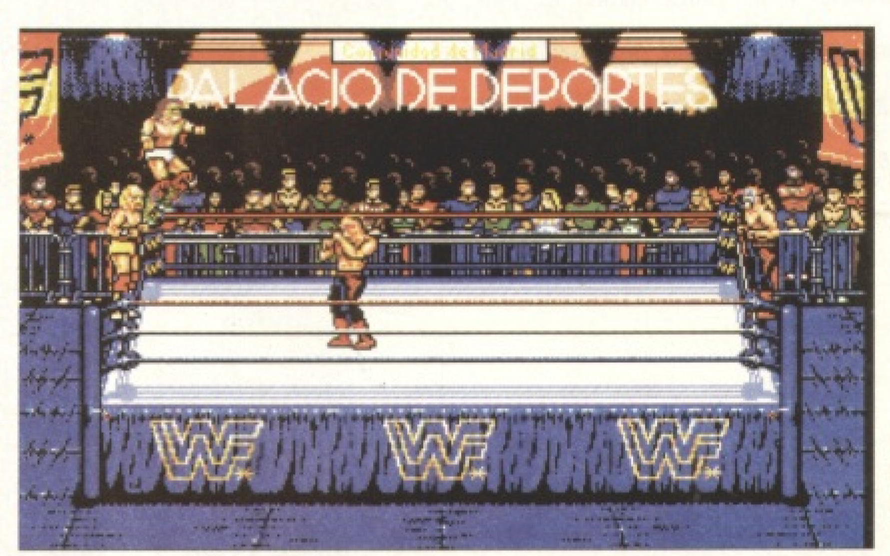
NEWS

IT'S A EUROPEAN RAMPAGE!



The World Wrestling Federation returns to the Amiga at the end of the year with Ocean's official follow-up to its chart-topping WWF Wrestlemania. Although the original sold bucketloads and was Number One last Christmas, it got a well-deserved panning from the critics - something that Ocean is well aware of and is going to lengths to prevent happening again this time around.

With WWF popularity increasing in Europe, the European Rampages - in which the beefy superstars jet over here to wrestle - are becoming more and more frequent. The recent SummerSlam at Wembley Stadium was a sellout and Ocean, never one to miss a trick, is using the Euro theme as the basis for the new game. WWF European Rampage takes the player to venues around the continent, battling all the familiar opponents. We've been informed that much more attention is being paid to gameplay, with work on the new game dating back to the start of the year. There's a new team on it two, with Arc Developments replacing Twilight, who handled the original. Strangely, there doesn't seem to be a lot to show for nine month's work - these exclusive shots come from an early playable demo version. As you can see, the graphics have been revamped - the ring now occupies just a single screen, and Tag-Team matches have been incorporated too. Beyond that, details are still woefully vague. More next month, with any luck.



NEW AMIGA: LATEST

The rumours of a new Amiga, aimed squarely at games-players, are getting stronger by the day, with the latest bit of gossip hinting that the fabled machine may be in the shops by Christmas.

This latest news comes as Commodore launches the latest in a long line of Amigas - the high-end A4000, which for just £1999, offers almost limitless graphical potential - how does 16.7 million colours, sprites the size of the entire screen and "perfect scrolling" grab you? Admittedly the machine's aimed at the more serious user, although the new AA chipset technology that it employs to produce such stunning results will almost definitely be used by the mystery games machine as well, according to Commodore boss Kelly Sumner. So, weighing up all the evidence, we could be a seeing a new games Amiga, with a super-low pricepoint and FIVE TIMES the graphical power available before the end of the year! It's still all educated speculation at the moment, but enough to get a few mouths watering - not least of all ours.

STOP PRESS! It's highly probable that, come next month's issue, we'll have CAST IRON details of the new machine - stay tuned to this channel.

NETBUSTERS!

Round Two

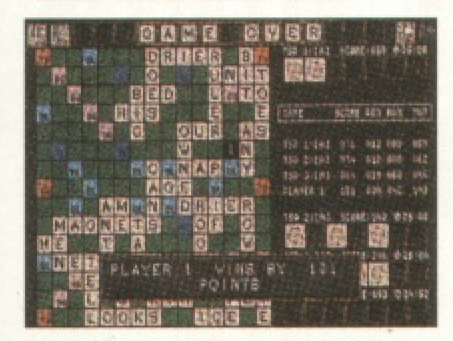
Your Sensible Soccer goals continue to flood in, at a rate that's fast becoming as frightening as Alan Shearer's goal tally. Poor old postie has had to have a metal rod surgically implanted into his back to help carry the heaving mailbags of Highlights that arrive daily on our doorstep. Believe us, having to work our way through this little lot is no picnic - certainly not when we'd rather be playing the game ourselves, anyway.

But we digress - to business. This is the second month of the Renegade Sensible Soccer Netbusters competition, in which six lucky winners put forward by The One will play in a European tournament against the winners of doppleganger competitions in the continental mags, with the final victor jetting off to watch any European football fixture of his choice next season! Each month we're selecting the best of the saved-out Highlights we receive, and the winner not only goes forward to the final six, but also picks up an authentic Arkwrights old-style football jersey!

This month's winner is Julian Smith, whose goals as Sheffield United against European giants Club Bruges, Ajax and Kaiserslautern earn him a place in the finalist's roster. The goals are outstanding not just because of the final touch (although there was some super finishing), but for the whole set-up, in one case comprising an incredible after-touched ball in from the halfway line that the striker picks up first time and blasts into the back of the net. Like we said, we're not looking for one-off flukes, but for consistently fine goals that prove the scorer's skill beyond doubt.

The competition still has four months to run, so there are four finals places still to be won. To be in with a chance, all you have to do is score some BLINDING goals, stick them on a Highlights disk and send them to us at SENSIBLE SOCCER NETBUSTERS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And remember that you MUST write your name and address on the disk label, or David will come round your house and show you his holiday snaps. Eurgh!

WORD UP

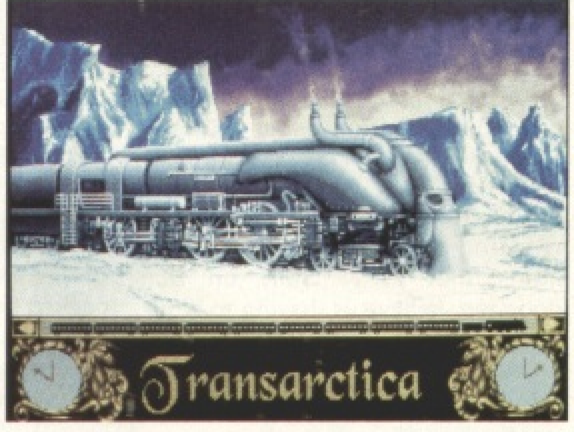


"Scrabble like you've never played it before." That's what you're being promised by US Gold, soon to bring out its official version of the classic board game. Quite why they think that the world needs another computer incarnation of Scrabble at this particular time is way beyond us, but it doesn't do to turn your nose up at the Greats, so for the record... US Gold's version comes with 12 skill levels (the hardest of which has won the Computer Olympiad twice, so it's no pushover), tournaments with up to four players, every word in the Chambers Official Scrabble Dictionary (over 126,000 at the last count), a printer option to commit the final board position to paper and - it says here - stunning graphics. The pictorial evidence here tells rather a different story, but then what do you want from a Scrabble game? Dancing letters with tu-tus on? Personally, we never quite understood why somebody would want to go to all this trouble when they could play the real thing for a fraction of the price and hassle, but each to his own, we suppose. Should be quite good for people with no friends, anyway.

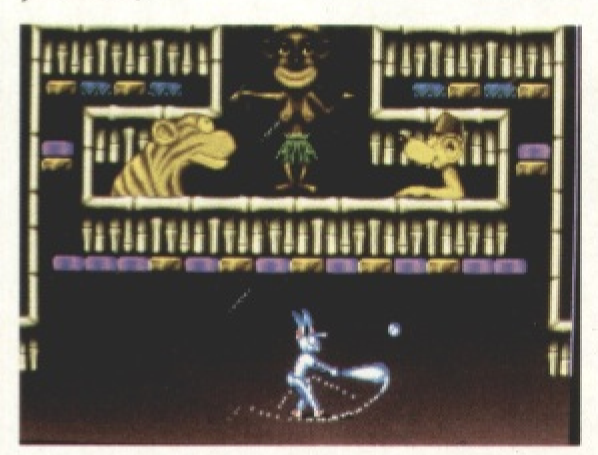


TWO NEW FROM SILMARILS





Having already had two rather impressive successes with Storm Master and Ishar, French outfit Silmarils is back this month with a pair of newies to tantalise you between now and the new year (just around the corner, you know).



The first is Bunny Bricks, a game that - get this - combines brick-breaking Breakout action, Baseball and rabbits (!). Exactly what it's all about hasn't been made that clear, but we're told that on each screen Bunny must destroy every brick he sees with his trusty baseball bat (sounds familiar enough), while being hindered by a supporting cast of colourful characters. The whole thing's supposed to be very cartoony, and inspired in part by the work of Tex Avery, so expect plenty of slapstick touches along the way. Look out for Bunny Bricks next month .

Hot on the trail of that comes Transarctica, an altogether deeper affair from the creators of Storm Master. Along much the same strategic lines, its decidedly Midwinter-esque storyline tells of a scientific experiment that goes horribly wrong (do scientific experiments ever go RIGHT in these game scenarios?) that triggers a second Ice Age and destroys the human race. So, centuries later a new civilisation emerges, travelling through the snowy wastes in giant trains between primitive shanty-towns. As the idealistic captain of Transarctica, the biggest train of the lot, the player's job is to find a way, as prophesied, to thaw out the planet and return it to its former glory. Doing so means going up against the cynical power block of the Viking Union, who like the planet the way it is - and so the scene is set for a bit of strategy and political intrigue, french-style. Transarctica is due out in January at £29.99. Just between us though, it's Bunny Bricks we're really waiting to see...



STRIPTEASERS

...Grandslam releases a bumper Amiga compilation at the end of this month, featuring no less than TEN of its old titles. The games on The Grandslam Collection are, in no particular order, The Hunt For Red October, England, The Flintstones, Scramble Spirit, Leavin' Terramis, Trivia, The Running Man, Terry's Big Adventure, Terramex and Espionage. None of them are particularly outstanding, which probably explains why they've been collected together en masse here, but at £29.99 for the lot (for the less mathematically-inclined among you, that's just under three quid per game) no doubt some of you software skinflints will be splashing out...

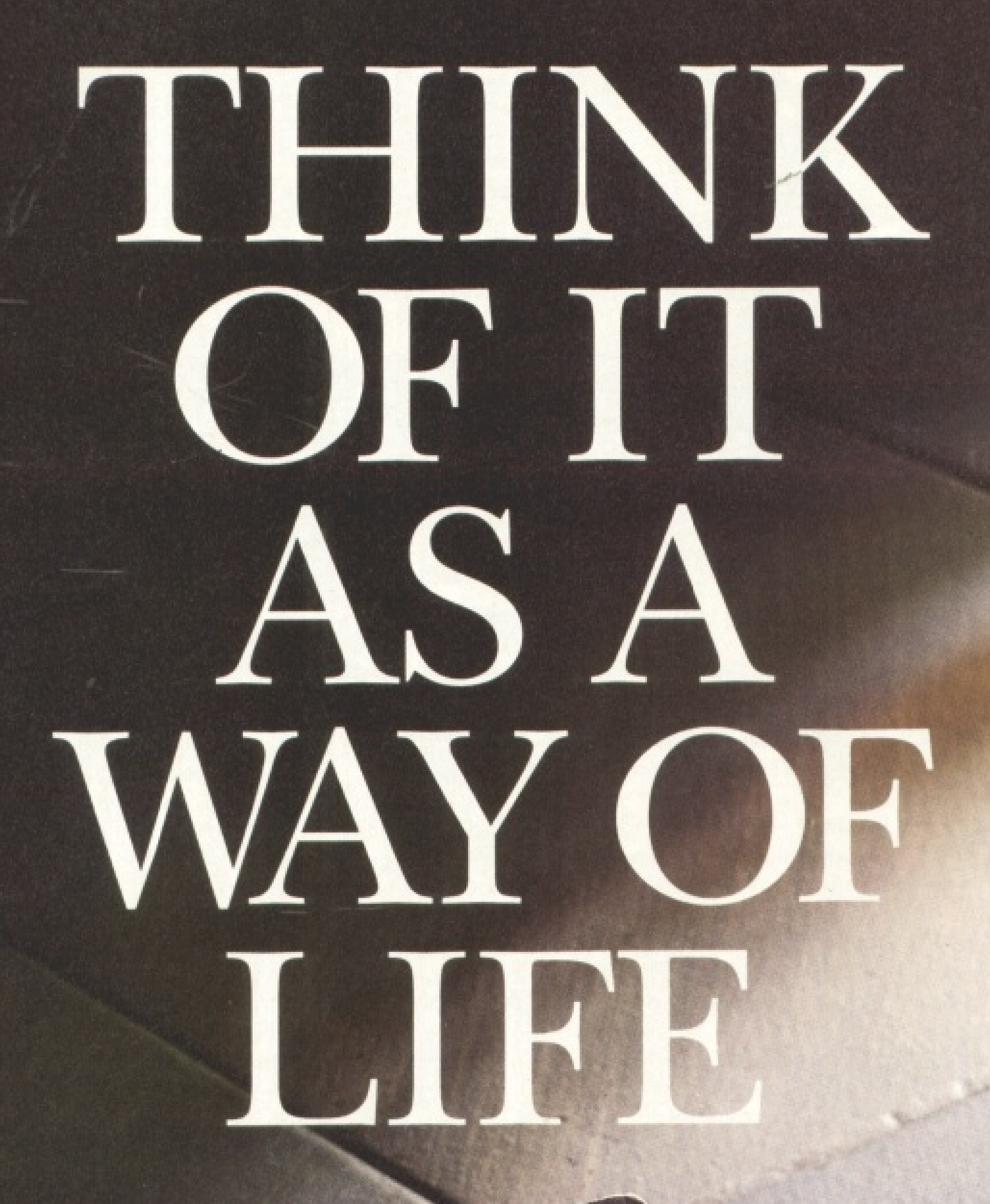
...More compilation news, this time concerning yet another in a long line of football collections. Following in the tradition of Gascoigne and Lineker, England defender Stuart "Psycho" Pearce has this month lent his name to UbiSoft's soccer compendium. The Psycho Soccer Collection (yes, that's really what it's called) constitutes the weak International Soccer Challenge and World Championship Soccer, and the rather better Manchester United and Kick Off 2. £30.99 is the asking price, but if there is anyone left in the world who doesn't already own a copy of Kick Off 2 in some form or another, we'll eat our pants...

...News reaches us that Konami's Batman Returns adaptation is now in the capable hands of Denton Designs, and not Rage as originally reported. If memory serves, the development team haven't had anything out since Wreckers for Audiogenic, which was alright we suppose. Don't expect to see anything just yet - the first previews aren't due until Christmas, and the game's not expected to hit the shelves until well into 1993...

...Meanwhile, we hear that David Braben's Frontier may not make it out in time for Christmas. The finishing touches still being put to the long-awaited Elite sequel are taking slightly longer than expected, and Konami has said that January is now looking like a more realistic release date...

...Commodore continues to drop prices in its Amiga range, this time with the CDTV. As of this month both the CDTV Starter Pack and the flashier Multimedia Pack are slashed by £100 to £399 and £499 respectively. The move comes after the A600 was cut to £299, and has been selling like hot cakes around the country ever since. CBM's obviously hoping that its slow-starting CD machine will benefit from a similar kick-start. So, as they say on TV, there's never been a better time to buy...

...Strange to see, is it not, that the blockbusting Patriot Games still hasn't been snapped up for Amiga conversion. It's about the only big movie of the year that's still waiting to be licenced, which is strange when you consider how well its plethora of action sequences could be adapted, if put in the right hands. Softcos, rectify the situation immediately...



J OURNALISTS see new titles every week, each one claiming to be the best of it's kind, to date. Yet at the recent European Computer Trade Show it was the journalists themselves that could be found singing the praises of one new title in particular - LEGENDS OF VALOUR.

KEVIN BULMER (The Designer of Corporation) and IAN DOWNEND the creators of LEGENDS OF VALOUR, were literally jostled off their feet as writers, retailers and fellow programmers sought to experience what one prominent industry figure called "A game that's more a way of life - utterly extraordinary."

Demo disks can only scratch the surface, screenshots in magazines could never do the astounding graphics justice (that's why you'll see none here). The only way to really find out what all the fuss is about is to experience it for yourself. LEGENDS OF VALOUR - The Dawning will be available on Amiga, ST and PC very soon.

Ask your retailer for more details or send a S.A.E. to Danielle Woodyatt at the address below for an information pack.





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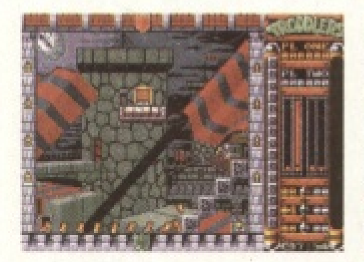


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RECOMMENDED...

It's frightening how many new games are released on Amiga each month. And it's even more frightening to consider how few of them are actually any good. So every issue we remove a little strife from your life, and present for you here, in easily-digestible form, what we believe to be the very finest pick of the latest crop...



TRODDLERS (Storm)

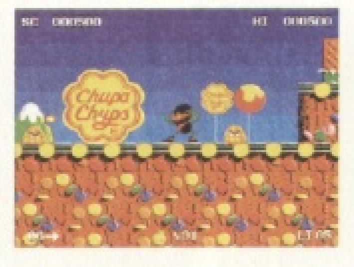
Well, is it like Lemmings or not? It depends on who you speak to, but one thing's for sure, it's a Premier League game. Combining traditional puzzle and arcade elements, it certainly sounds like Lemmings on paper - guide the hapless little men across traps and pitfalls to a safe haven - but in practice is plays with a style and verve all of its own. If the only thing you use your brain for is to keep the top of your head caving in, this is not for you, but if you're after a mental challenge to keep you going into the small hours, you'll love it.

85%

FIREFORCE (ICE)

One of those games you'll either love or hate - and we love it. Sure, it lacks technical sophistication. Sure, the graphics are nothing to shout about. But playability's where it counts, and Fireforce has got bundles of the stuff. Take your Green Beret hardman through 12 missions around the world, shooting down and blowing up everything in his path. A plethora of nice touches raise Fireforce above the usual shoot'em-up ranks, and anyone who isn't put off by its rather graphic portrayal of violence will have a very merry time here.

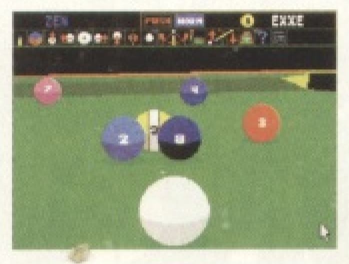
90%



ZOOL (Gremlin)

Sonic the Hedgehog? Chronic the Smedgebog more like. Zool makes no attempt to hide the fact that it's inspired by the Sega favourite - but it does everything bigger, better and brighter. One of the most chaotic and colourful platform games ever seen, Zool manages to retain its fine playability even at the apex of its breakneck speed. Probably not to everyone's taste (it's the sort of thing that gives parents migraines), but if you can stand the pace, there's little that can offer more in the way of high-speed thrills than this.

87%



ARCHER MACLEAN'S POOL (Virgin)

The follow-up to the mega-selling Jimmy White's Whirlwind Snooker, Archer Maclean's Pool uses the same jaw-dropping 3D graphic techniques to depict the action, but the game is, if anything, more playable this time, simply because Pool is more immediate, accessible and fun than Snooker. There's not really a great deal more to say, except that if you don't enjoy playing this, there must be something fundamentally wrong with you.

90%



PUTTY (System 3)

The weirdest thing we've seen since Wizkid, and one of the most playable too. Putty is like Rainbow Islands on acid, an incredibly frantic platform epic based around the upwardly-mobile exploits of a blob of Putty that can bounce, stretch and absorb his way around any gameplay eventuality. Loads of levels, exquisite cartoon-style graphics and a cacophony of vibrant sampled sound from beginning to end makes Putty a supersonic assault on the senses that you won't want to let up for quite a while. It deserves to be a big hit.

87%

MICROBYTE CHARTS Month Ending 27th September 1992

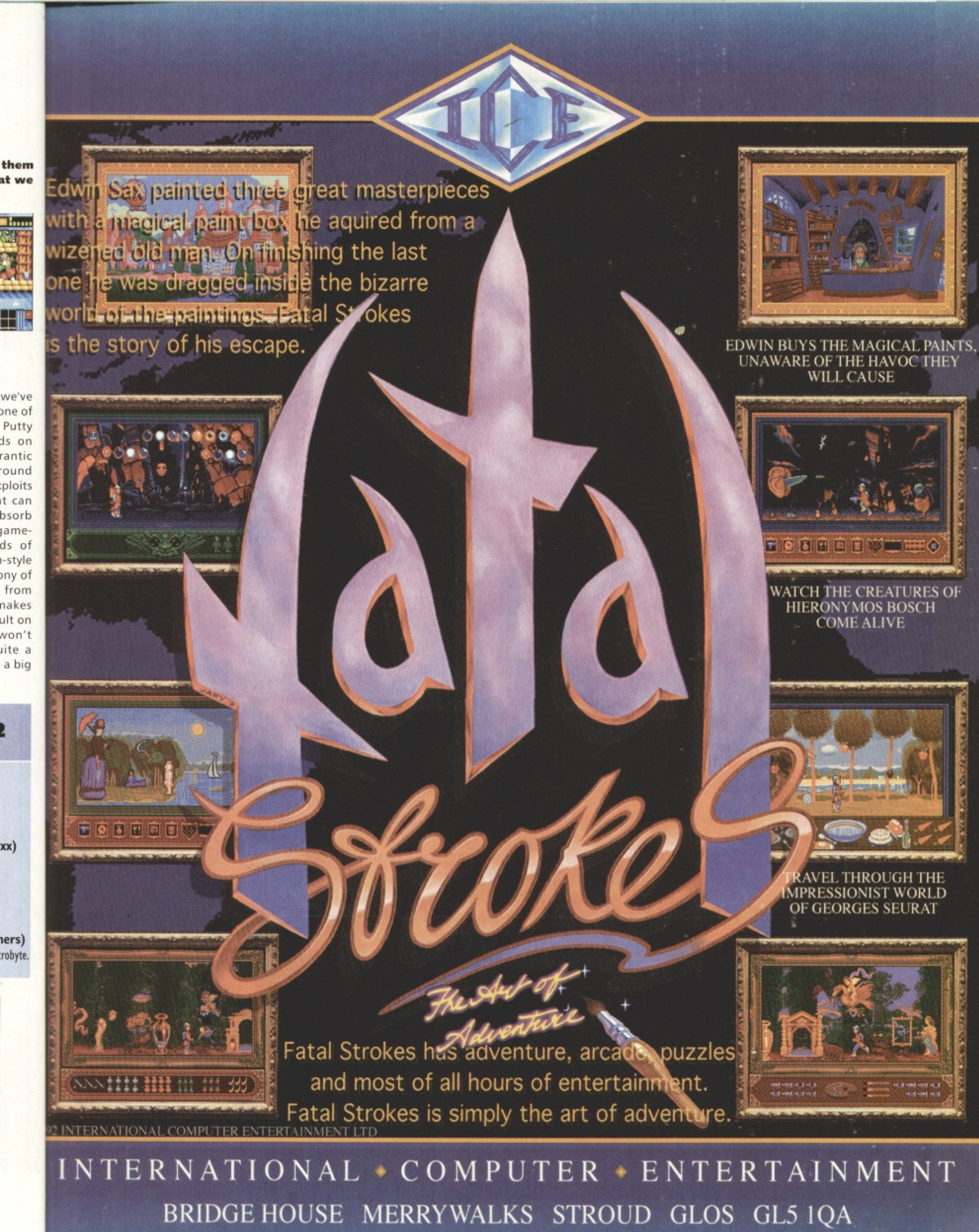
FULL-PRICE TOP 40

1 ZOOL (Gremlin)
2 BEAST III (Psygnosis)
3 SENSIBLE SOCCER (Renegade)
4 PGA TOUR GOLF (Electronic Arts)
5 JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER (Virgin)
6 LEGEND OF ISHAR (Silmarils)
7 MANCHESTER UNITED EUROPE (Krisalis)
8 OH NO! MORE LEMMINGS (Psygnosis)
9 PREMIERE (Core Design)
10 FORMULA ONE GRAND PRIX (Microprose)
11 MONKEY ISLAND 2 (US Gold)
12 LURE OF THE TEMPTRESS (Virgin)
13 PROJECT-X (Team 17)
14 HOOK (Ocean)
15 CIVILIZATION (Microprose)
16 WIZKID (Ocean)
17 FIRE & ICE (Renegade)
18 SPACE CRUSADE (Gremlin)
19 LOTUS 2 (Gremlin)
20 BEHOLDER 2 (US Gold)
21 THE GAMES ESPANA 92 (Ocean)
22 EPIC (Ocean)
23 ROBOCOP 3 (Ocean)
24 PRO TENNIS TOUR 2 (UbiSoft)
25 DYNABLASTER (UbiSoft)
26 ROBOCOD (Millennium)
27 DARK QUEEN OF KRYNN (SSI)
28 AIR SUPPORT (Psygnosis)
29 ASHES OF EMPIRE (Mirage)
30 KNIGHTS OF THE SKY (Microprose)
31 DAS BOOT (Mindscape)
32 MEGASPORTS (US Gold)
33 STRIKER (Rage)
34 THE MANAGER (US Gold)
35 A320 AIRBUS (Thalion)
36 THE PERFECT GENERAL (UbiSoft)
37 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER (Domark)
38 GRAHAM TAYLOR'S SOCCER CHALLENGE (Krisalis)
39 SPECIAL FORCES (Microprose)
40 ALIEN BREED (Team 17)

BUDGET TOP 20

1 SUPER CARS 2 (GBH)
2 FALCON (Action 16)
3 PANZA KICK BOXING (Kixx)
4 CAPTAIN DYNAMO (Codemasters)
5 F-16 COMBAT PILOT (Action 16)
6 PANG (The Hit Squad)
7 BATMAN THE MOVIE (The Hit Squad)
8 LOTUS (GBH)
9 DIZZY PRINCE OF THE YOLKFOLK (Codemasters)
10 FANTASY WORLD DIZZY (Codemasters)
11 TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY (Codemasters)
12 JAMES POND (GBH)
13 RAINBOW ISLANDS (The Hit Squad)
14 BATTLE CHESS (Star Performers)
15 JACK NICKLAUS GOLF (Kixx)
16 SWITCHBLADE II (GBH)
17 NEW ZEALAND STORY (The Hit Squad)
18 IK+ (The Hit Squad)
19 TURRICAN II (Kixx)
20 POPULOUS (Star Performers)

The One's Amiga charts are provided by Microbyte.


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Letters

We haven't got much space this month so you'll have to go without the amusing intro and general self-congratulatory quips and write to: Letters, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1 3AU if you've got anything interesting to say. You can FAX us too, so all you Faxers dial 071 972 6703.

MOVE OVER KILROY

The question of game difficulties in last month's Letters pages certainly increased the volume of letters we've received over the past few weeks, so let's not hang about too long and dive straight in...

Dear The One,
Personally I find games far too easy to complete, either that or they are too short and do no last very long. Midnight Resistance, Pang, Lotus 2, Switchblade 2 and Turrican 2 only lasted three days and Project-X was beaten after just five days. You don't believe me? Well, the end sequence has some explosions and rather nice music. A message says 'Try again without loosing a life'.

The worst offender must be Battle Squadron which took me only one day to complete. Only Populous 2, Lemmings, SWIV and Rainbow Islands have given me true value for money. The best thing that companies can do is provide difficulty settings in the games. When I buy Zool I will put the difficulty to maximum and the lives and credits to minimum as this will be the only way I can have some challenge.

Nathan White,
West Midlands.



Dear The One,
Last month the question of game difficulties was raised and I think that it's high time that somebody stood up for all us gamers. In my opinion I'm just an average game player, so I do not expect to be able to complete a game which I buy for upwards of £25.99 in a short space of time. Another World was an exceptional piece of software, granted, but at the end of the day all it boiled down to was a couple of days play (although admittedly that's twice as many as 'Epic').

In games the player should be guided through levels increasing in difficulty until real talent is required to progress any further. Games such as the original Lemmings, Populous and Eye of the Beholder were fine examples of this. Of course there will always be an end to a game - it has to come somewhere - but if software houses think they can keep fobbing us off with poorly-designed products then they have got another thing coming.

The games which have no specific 'end' (Sensible Soccer, F1GP, etc.) offer the best value for money around and I think that more open-ended games like this should be produced. £35.99 for at least a good year's play offers far more value than £25.99 for a week's play.

In future I think I will stick to these simulation games because of their variation, longevity and fun.

Stewart Wicks,
Aberdeen.

Well, Stuart, yours was the only letter that offered a suitable alternative to easy/hard games and so you qualify for a free piece of software. If you could let us know whether you want Another World or Epic within the next few weeks we'd be grateful. (Only joking.)

* * *

Dear The One,
In my opinion games are too hard. I consider myself to be a fairly average game player but some games just start at an impossible difficulty level and get harder. After a very short time frustration makes you stick the game at the back of the shelf, never to be played again - £30 down the drain. I must admit that such games are not that common but there are enough of them to make it a worrying trend.

A more common problem with games is the difficulty of the end-of-level guardians rather than the levels themselves. A good example of this is Rainbow Islands and Parasol Stars - two games in my top ten of games. In my opinion guardians should be in a game to (a) let you know that you've completed the level and (b) to leave behind lots of points and power-ups once they are killed. They are not there to slow the game down or to use up all your lives trying to kill them. I can get as far as Level Three in Rainbow Islands and Level Four in Parasol Stars. When you consider the amount of those games that I'll never see you can understand why I'd favour built-in cheats.

Now I don't mean the hidden cheats that get printed in magazines like yours but cheats that can be started from the main menu of the game itself. This way the not-so-good games players could be catered for and as you learn more about the game you can also up the difficulty yourself, increasing the game's lastability.

Carl Surry,
Barnet, Herts.

* * *

Dear The One,
I have owned my Amiga for nearly two years now and of the games brought in the past year I have completed 80% of them, most within the first few weeks. I feel that although the majority of games have certainly improved graphically and sonically I wonder whether some companies are perhaps more interested in a game's looks and not its lastability. I still find 'old' games such as Xenon 2 and Rainbow Islands a challenge whereas the new games (such as Myth, Guy Spy and The Addams Family) are far too easy and I completed them within a few weeks.

I know I might be going on a bit (Zzzzz! What? - Ed.) but I feel that size is important. Games like Hook and Guy Spy, which are by no means terrible, suffer due to their diminutive size. Others such as Monkey Island 2, Premier and Harlequin gain marks because of their size which permits far more scope and variety. I would forgive an easy game (even Another World) if only it was bigger.

Nick Turk,
Kent.

▶ ▶ ▶ ▶

Letters

SHADY GOINGS ON

Dear The One,
Please can you help me. I have just exchanged my Megadrive for an Amiga 500 with over 200 games. I have It Came from the Desert and Monkey Island, both without manuals. Please could you let me know where I can get the manuals from.

Jason,
London.

Well, this all sounds a bit fishy to me. If you really have got over 200 games then I'd say that most of them are pirated - especially as you say you have no manuals for them. The ONLY way to obtain the official documentation for all games is to buy the original which I really think you should consider.

* * *

THE PIRACY PROBLEM

Dear The One,
It does NOT MATTER how many times people in the business decry piracy, it comes down to the same old thing.
Problem: Games cost too much resulting in piracy
Solution: Reduce the price of games
There is NO other solution that can stop piracy and it is naive to believe anything else. If games companies are making enough money to continue in business without acting positively to stop piracy then you can only conclude that they are not being adversely affected all that much by it.

The movement of programmers away from computers to games consoles is inevitable as that market is growing most rapidly. When the market for consoles has matured it too will cease to be more attractive to programmers and new formats will undoubtedly become the magnets to games designers.

Carol Hunter,
Middlesex.

P.S. Has anyone, anywhere ever completed Rocket Ranger? If so, please tell me how.

* * *

BETTER THAN AVERAGE

Dear The One,
Thanks for a brill magazine - keep up the good work (Aw, shucks - Ed.). The reason for my letter is to ask why your overall percentage mark isn't an average of all the other marks. Surely this would give a fairer view of the reviewed game. For example, in last month's mag you gave Pool 90% although its average score would have been 86.25% which is high enough without leaving yourselves open to criticism when, in the future, better games will still be under the magic 100% mark.

In the October issue when comparing the Overall scores with the average scores all the game percentages would have been similar except for Fireforce (Overall 90%, average 83%, which accounts for the crappy graphics - unacceptable on the Amiga). Nova 9 and Match of the Day have almost exactly the same Overall and average (59 & 59.75 and 66 & 66.5 respectively) which gives a fairer impression. What are your thoughts?

John Alfred
Hyde, Cheshire

We think it would be unfair to introduce average marks simply because if a game plays exceptionally well but has only okay-ish graphics then overall it would end up being rated lower than perhaps it should be. We have enough problems working out whether we've got enough enough money for beer at the end of the day, let alone all this 'average' business. Don't you think we work hard enough as it is?

* * *

SOCCER SILLIES

Dear The One,
Wow. Sensi-Soccer 2, already! What fantastic news! I have a few ideas which I think should be implemented which I would be grateful if you would pass on to the boys at Sensible Software.

First of all there should be a managerial aspect to the game where you can play Graham Taylor, chopping and changing the England side in the run-up to the World Cup until the team looks a vegetable patch.

Unemployed Saint and Greavsie should be seen wandering around the side of the pitch collecting litter and scraping around in the bins for food. Before the match dancers could come on and perform the fantastic BSKYB 'Alive and Kicking' dance whilst desperately trying to smile during the torrential rain. Oh, and of course, QPR should be invincible.

Stephen Paul,
Hayes.

There's a couple of good ideas in there (especially the QPR bit) and we'll certainly pass the letter on to Sensible. What do other readers think? Is there a feature that you think should be included in any sequel, be it in the pipeline or not? Let us know and you could win some groovy software.

* * *

HMMM...

Dear Sarge,
I had a £200 debt and was in quite a bit of trouble. My brother was really upset about my problem so he sold all his games for around £60 to help me out. He now has no games and is very upset. He showed me reviews of Sensible Soccer, Lotus 2 and Microprose F1GP. I think the software would be a great way of saying "Thank you".

Nuala McLoughlin,
Co. Kilkenny.

Dear Nuala,
Well, it shows that you haven't been doing your homework, doesn't it? I think you should keep up to date with all the changes in the magazine (like no more Sergeant Software, for starters) before you write scrounging letters to us.

The One, London.

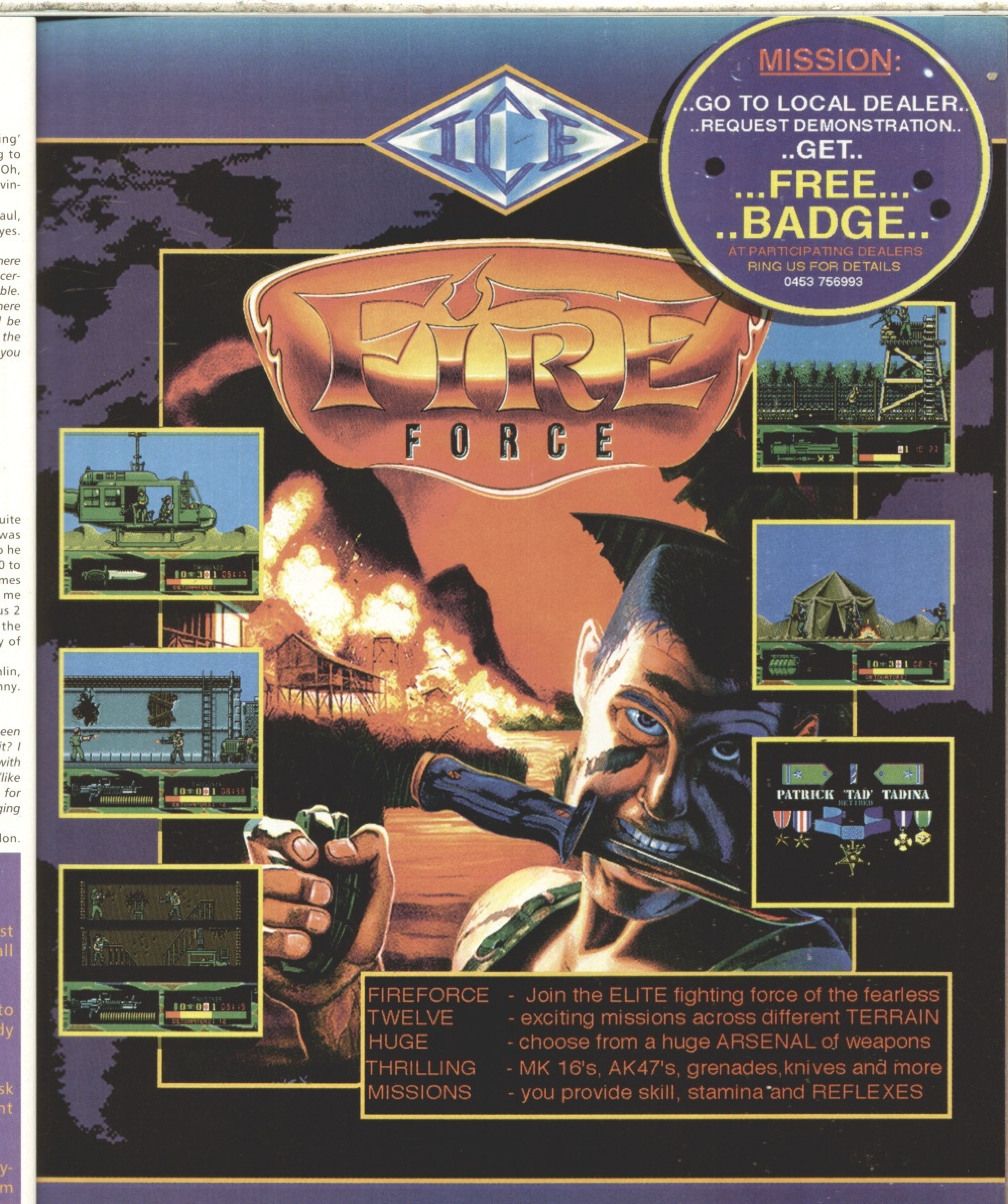
JUST A COUPLE OF POINTS...

Douglas Miller from Ayrshire has also experienced the F1/A600 problem (see last issue). If the "Not enough RAM" message pops up then try disconnecting all peripherals (disk drives, printers etc.), he suggests.

Peter Brown from Newmachar would like to know whether it's possible to exchange his Workbench 1.3 Amiga for a 1.2! We'd like to know why anybody would want to.

'Miserable' James Rogers from Farnborough has broken his Waggle-O-Mania disk and would like some free software to make up for it! Blimey, you don't want much, do you? Wadda ya think we are - made of games?

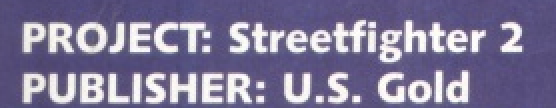
All The One team would just like to say that to even stand a chance of qualifying for freebies in return for a letter we expect more than just a few random squiggles with a 'Can I have Zool, please' stuck at the end of it. Remember, askers don't get, apparently.



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THALION



PROJECT: Streetfighter 2
PUBLISHER: U.S. Gold
DEVELOPER: Tony Bickley (Producer)
Creative Materials -
Gordon Thong (Programmer)
Adam Steele (Artist)
Michael Guy (Artist)
INITIATED: April 1992



Street Fighting Years

The sensation that's sweeping the nation will shortly be arriving on your Amiga. Expectations are running high and there's a wealth of fighters simply dying to try their strength in the ultimate street-brawl. We've received so many phonecalls this month that we've had to send Simon Byron off to find out exactly how things are shaping up. So then, "can you do the Dragon Punch or what?"

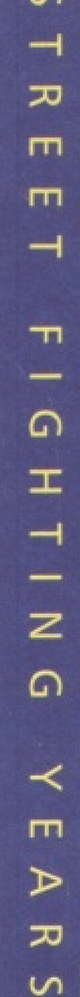
To the uninitiated it's hard to see why Streetfighter 2 has become quite the game-playing phenomenon that it is. After all, it's simply a beat-'em-up with flashy graphics, right? Wrong. The arcade machine has been packing in the punters because of its innovative six-button control, extreme violence quotient and 'extra touches' such as the special moves (including the infamous Dragon Punch). People spend literally weeks at a time learning the different character's strengths and weaknesses, eventually becoming so proficient that they can perform the 'Hundred Hand Slap' in their sleep (and as such wake up with extremely bruised parts of their anatomy).

When I first heard that Streetfighter 2 had arrived in the local arcade I popped out one lunchtime to see what all the fuss was about. Three days later I returned back down to The One haggard and physically exhausted (and really rather smelly). There was a lot more to it than I had ever imagined. Apart from being a simple beat-'em-up with endless thrashing on the buttons there is a certain amount of 'strategy' (for want of a better word), with all manner of situations requiring different tactical play.

Whilst playing against the really hard blokes who practically live in the arcade I found myself more often than not being backed into a corner having the brown stuff beaten out of me. It was only after some of the more sociable chaps pointed out the games intricacies that I found out what to do when, and not just randomly bash on the fire buttons in no particular order.

Converting this game is a not job for the faint-hearted and Creative Materials have been chosen to perform what, at first glance, seems like the impossible. With a proven track record including Final Fight and The Godfather, Streetfighter 2 certainly is in capable hands. We spoke to Tony Bickley, product manager at USG, about how it's all going.

Rather than being slightly wary of the project, Tony is loving every minute of it as he's a huge Streetfighter 2 fan: "Unlike most beat-'em-ups it's





Although the backgrounds aren't animated, there`s no denying that they look almost identical to the coin-op with all the locations from the original arcade version represented in all their glory. A chance to brush up on the old geography, methinks!

very easy to play and it's immensely instinctive - if you want a move you can access it straight away knowing exactly what will happen on-screen, rather than just wiggling the joystick and pressing buttons. And this is something that we feel it's critical to get into the floppy versions. The Artificial Intelligence of the opponents plays an important part as well - it's certainly not the 'learn one move to beat a particular opponent' situation. There is a choice of moves which can not only be used to beat them, they can - and certainly will - use them to beat you".

Obviously with a coin-op conversion it's vital to include as much of the original's features as possible. How much help had the programming team had from Capcom, the designers of Streetfighter 2? "We were basically only supplied with an arcade ROM board so we've had to rely heavily on the fact that our boys are experts at Streetfighter 2. In fact, it's got so bad that we've had to ban them from playing it any more," laughs Tony. "Although the board contained all the code we've had to break that down ourselves - an operation known as 'Reverse Engineering' - which took our guys a solid week to do. After all that it was a case of on-going tweaks during development to make sure that the programmers' interpretation of the game was exactly how we wanted it to play".

The entire game is currently just over two megabytes big, a figure that's still rising. The graphics are obviously an extremely memory-intensive portion of Streetfighter 2 and although they are not as colourful its arcade parent (due to the fact that the Amiga's sprites are drawn in 32 colours as opposed to the 256 of the coin-op), they certainly look remarkably similar. If you asked Tony to describe the graphics he'd respond with one word "Awesome", but then he's bound to, isn't he?

> **"I sincerely think that this is going to be the best beat-'em-up ever!"**
>
> **Tony Bickley**
> **Streetfighter 2 Producer.**

Converting the sprites was a mammoth task in itself. When you consider that there are over 223 individual frames of animation for every character (which works out at at least 2676 frames in all), you'll appreciate that the two artists have certainly had their work cut out. The characters are equally as large on the Amiga screen as on the original, with each made up of a number of sprites, each representing different parts of the body, cut and pasted on the play-area to give the





Well `ard!

A quiet stroll down the street will reveal a whole range of tasty geezers and geezettes. Let`s take a look at who they are and what they'll hit you with...

BLANKA ▶

The monster of the street, Blanka possess the rather unique ability to electrify his skin. He can also jump onto an unsuspecting opponent and bite at their face.

BISON

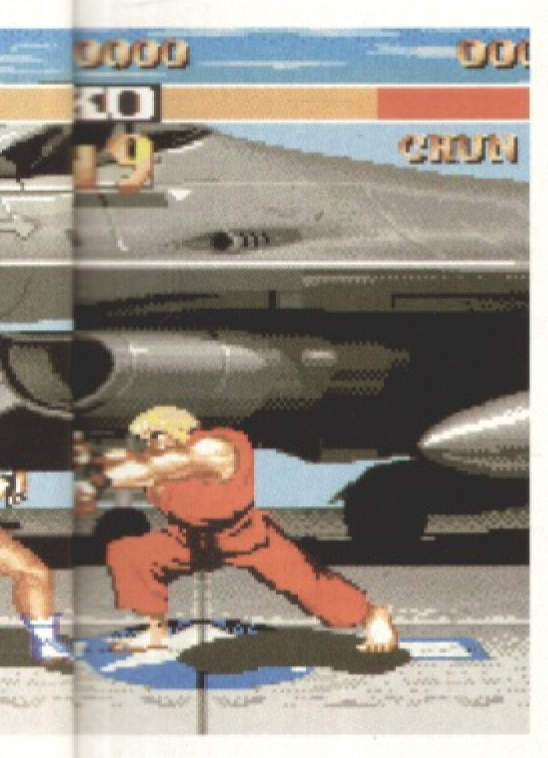
VEGA

◀ CHUN LI

This sleek-n'-sexy fighter packs a mean kick as well as good looks. She often stands on one leg and lashs out with dazzling speed and can also perform the spectacular spinning-bird kick.



(Left and below)
Whilst Chun Li may be an extremely attractive young lady, she can cetainly hold her own when it comes to fighting. Ken is no push-over either and the two of them are currently debating who's the toughest as we speak. The actual characters are moving only slightly slower than the arcade's - quite an achievement when you consider the size of the huge sprites.



impression of movement.

Unfortunately the parallax and the background animations have had to be omitted to keep the game running at a near-arcade rate, but these effects were only superfluous anyway and will hardly detract from the gameplay. Most of the sound effects have been directly digitised from the coin-op, including the speech, and Creative are desperately trying to cram as many of these effects as possible into the final version. All this comes with a price, though, and the game will unfortunately be one megabyte only. Even so, you could still pick up a meg expansion and a copy of the game for less than the SNES version, which is retailing at a pricey £65 compared to £27.99 for the Amiga.

The ultimate test of the game will be when an experienced 'Fighter player comes along and plays the Amiga version for the first time. Tony is confident that most players will feel at ease with one of the three control methods provided in the game. "Provided the player has a two-button joystick the control method will be almost identical. If he doesn't have access to a joypad or whatever then they'll have to take a look at what we've implemented for the other two methods".

A long time was spent deliberating over the way the player would command his character and Tony's happy with what they've come up with. Basically, the other two methods are based around the keyboard and joystick or just the joystick on its own. "We decided to include a choice of controls because there are several people who prefer different methods and we didn't want to force players have to use something that they don't feel comfortable with. For a person with a joystick that he prefers to hold in his hand we have selected four punches and four kicks as well as the special moves which will be accessible from the joystick alone.





(Top) A Dragon Punch certainly wouldn't go a miss here as Ken finds himself in all sorts of trouble.
(Above) One of Chun Li`s special moves is this super-tough kick which produces a dazzling graphical effect as well as a few sore heads. Ken is currently blocking the deadly move so if he is struck then the blow will do far less damage than it would have done.



◀ E. HONDA

Not a motorbike but, in fact, a large sumo wrestler. He may be big but he's certainly no lard ball and will 'hundred-hand slap' anybody who says otherwise.

▼ GUILE

An ex-airforce soldier who is a master of combat karate. He packs a mean somersault kick which is hard to avoid and is capable of hurling a few energy bolts here and there.



◀ RYU

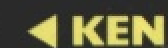
Kenpo and Karate is the name of his game. One of the hardest humans in Streetfighter 2 he can perform the Dragon Punch and the Hurricane Punch at the drop of a hat.



▲ ZANGIEF

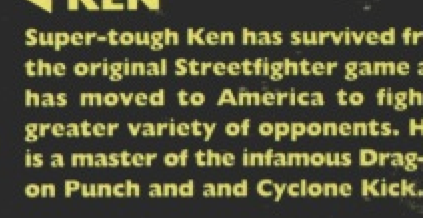
This Russian fighter has the most powerful move in the game at his disposal - the spinning pile-driver - and if that doesn't get you then the devastating Lariat Punch surely will.





◀ DHALSIM

A frightening master of voodoo who can stretch his limbs to inhuman lengths to give you a whack even when he's over the other side of the screen. If that wasn't enough he also breathes fire.



◀ KEN

Super-tough Ken has survived from the original Streetfighter game and has moved to America to fight a greater variety of opponents. He is a master of the infamous Dragon Punch and and Cyclone Kick.



You may well be wondering why Chun Li and Ken are appearing so frequently among these pages. The reason for this is that they`re currently still testing the gameplay and making sure all the controls 'feel' right. Blimey, you lot don`t half go on, don`t you?

(Below) Just for a change we've lined up the two fighters in another action-packed pose, this time in Russia. Say cheese!





"The Artificial Intelligence of the opponents plays an important part as well, it's certainly not the 'learn one move to beat a particular opponent' situation"

Tony Bickley
Streetfighter 2 Producer.

"Moving in any of the forward directions and pressing the fire button will make the character punch, whilst a backward joystick movement with the fire button will select one of the kicks. Up and down with the fire button will produce different actions according to the character being played. Blanka and Chun Li stand on one leg and kick straight up in the air so it makes sense to make the up and fire a 'kick' for them. Ken and Ryu, however, both have a massive upward punch so the up and fire will be a punch for them. The Dragon Punch, performed by Ryu and Ken, would be called up by first moving down then up and fire all in quick succession.



"Alternatively if you are prepared to use the keyboard as well as the joystick, then the final method involves using the keyboard as an extra fire button, doubling the amount of kicks and punches that the player can perform. Some characters have two special moves whilst others have three and they're all going to be present in the game, with the control mapped as closely as possible to the coin-op.

"Apart from the parralax and the animated backdrops, the only other thing missing from the Amiga that appears on the arcade machine will be a certain amount of moves in the joystick-only mode. Whereas on the coin-op you can perform three different speed kicks or punches for each height with each move inflicting a different amount of damage to the opponent, we have had to pick the best of the bunch, for the sake of simplicity. The proximity moves, performed when the two characters are near to each other, are all in with no problems. The bonus levels (where you have to kick a car to bits, kick some barrels and avoid the burning barrels) have all been included as well.

"To be honest I'm well pleased with how it's going", enthuses Tony. Whilst many may see these possible compromises as a drawback, there's a strong argument that the joystick-only mode will make the game slightly more easier and accessible to play. If you want a simple forward kick you got it, as the Burger King staff will readily tell you, without the need to fumble with the keys.

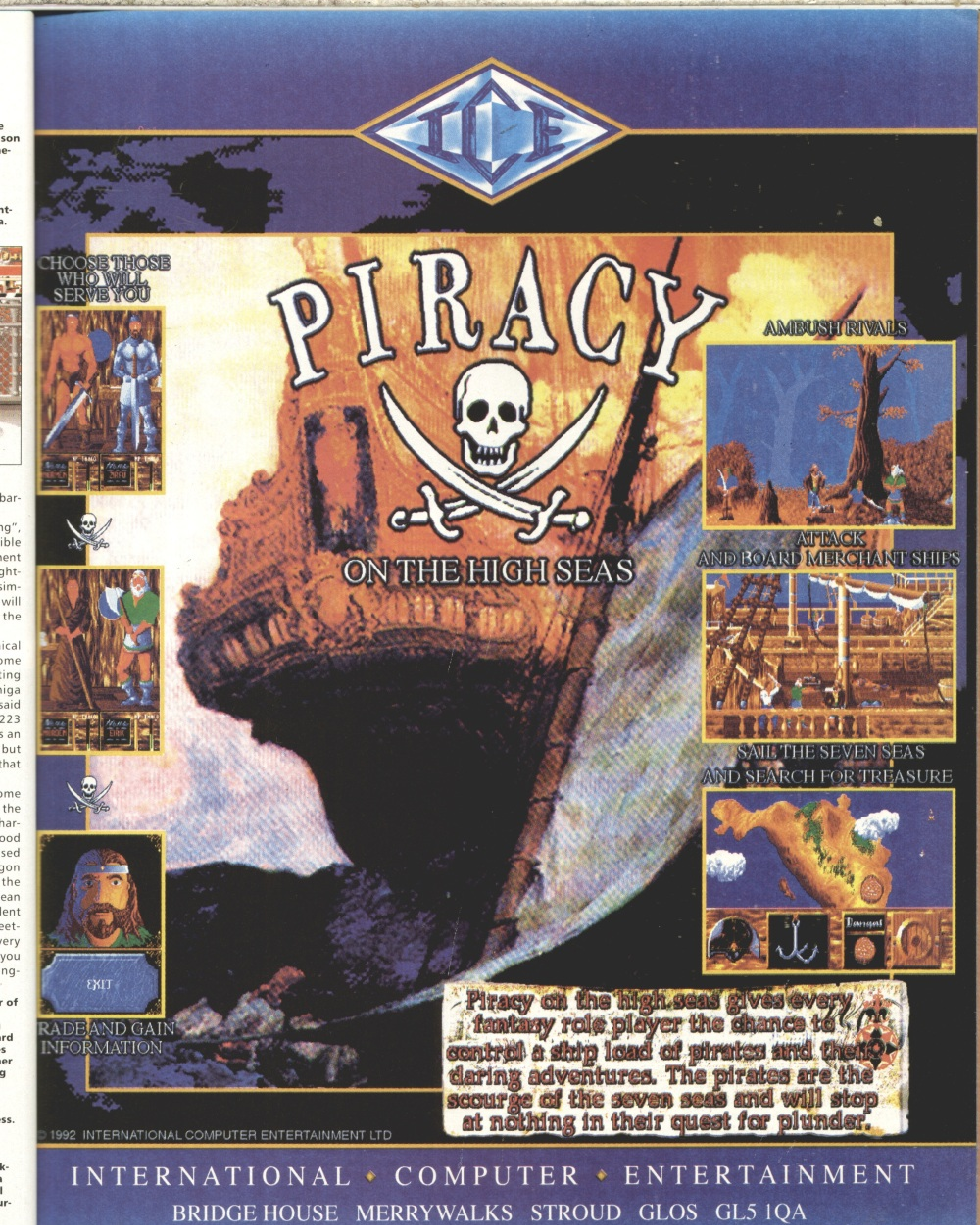
"The biggest problem has been the sheer technical aspect of getting a massive game like this into home computer size," bemoans Tony. "We're converting Streetfighter 2 to almost everything from the Amiga right down to the Spectrum which is scary. As I've said we've got twelve characters each with at least 223 frames of animation and eight backgrounds which is an enormous amount of graphics to be manipulating but I sincerely think that the job we've done will ensure that this is going to be the best beat-'em-up ever!"

Finally, and in a desperate attempt to obtain some 'Top Tips' so that I could beat everybody else when the game final arrives, I asked Tony who his favourite character is. "I always play Chun Li because she's got good legs [?]", he replied rather unhelpfully. Unimpressed with his distinctly sexist comments I did the Dragon Punch on him to teach him not to be so rude in the future. Tony wasn't shaken and after attempting a mean Cyclone Kick the whole interview turned into a violent and messy brawl (which I won, by the way). Streetfighter 2 will be bursting onto a shelf near you very shortly and with a little luck we should be bringing you the fully low-down next issue. Now please stop ringing us up, will you?

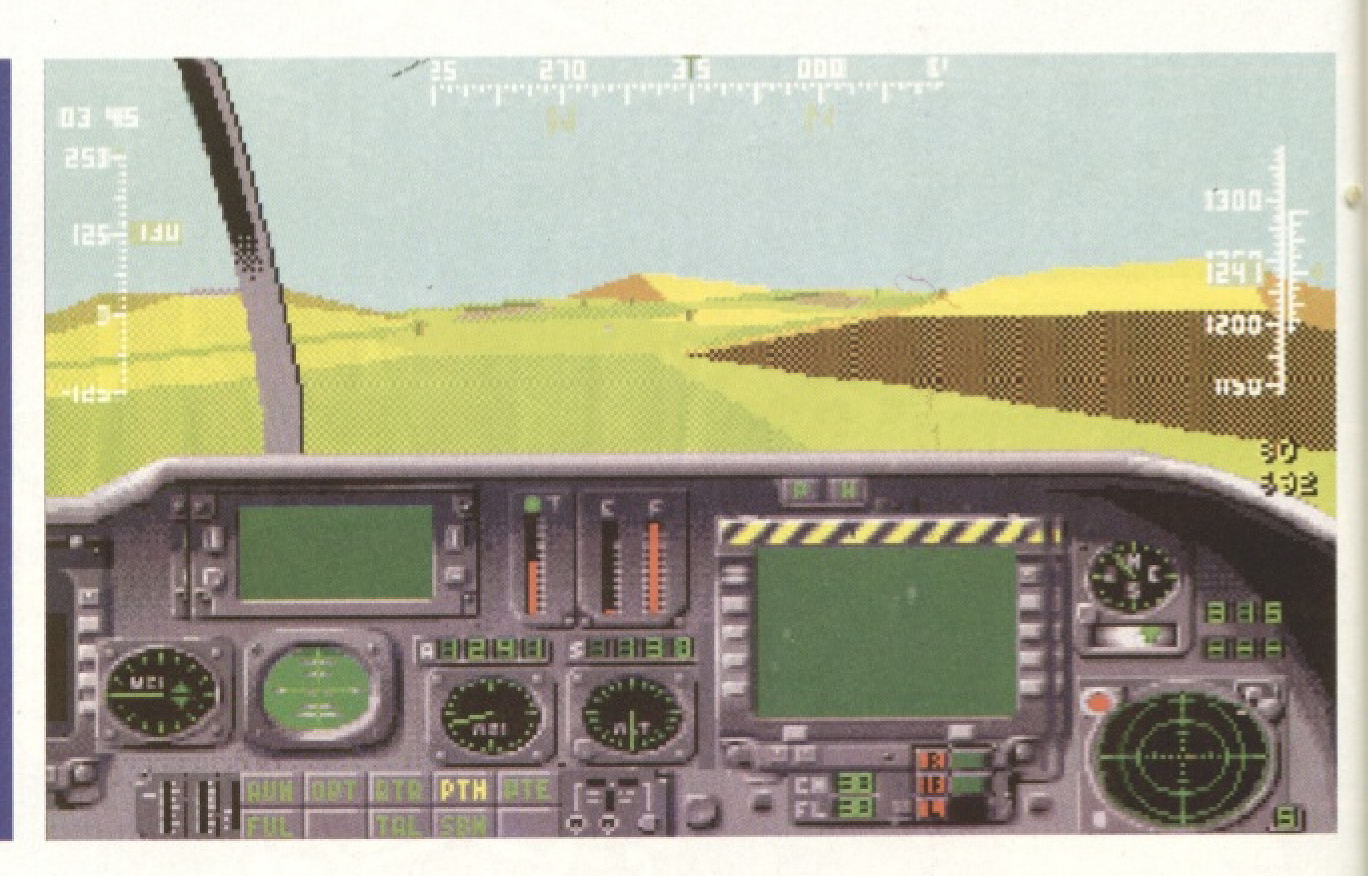


(Above Left) Another of Chun Li`s special moves. The Spinning Bird Kick is a rock-hard attack which requires Miss Li to stand on her hands whilst rotating her legs. Although it might not the most lady-like of moves it sure does the business.

(Left) The actual backdrops are two Amiga screens long and will horizontally scroll during each fight.


ICE
CHOOSE THOSE WHO WILL SERVE YOU
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PROJECT:
Gunship 2000
PUBLISHER:
Microprose
DEVELOPER:
Kevin Buckner (Programmer)
Mark Langerak (Programmer)
Mark Jones (Programmer)
INITIATED:
Early 1992
RELEASE:
November



The ship of

With Thunderhawk currently holding the 'Most Accessible And Enjoyable Helicopter Flight Sim' trophy, Microprose have decided to act. Their next foray into the skies is Gunship 2000, a conversion of the top PC game. Simon Byron takes it for a pre-launch spin...

I know what you're thinking: "A conversion of a complex PC 3D game... Hmmm that's going to be really fast." But let me put your minds at ease. The team coding Gunship 2000 are the very same guys who brought us Knights Of The Sky, a PC conversion itself, and one of (if not the) best flight simulations ever to be released on the Amiga. That out of the way, then, let us proceed...

The team's main goal is to make the Amiga version of Gunship 2000 as good as, if not better than, the PC one - a formidable task considering the humble Amiga's capabilities. The biggest problem, of course, is keeping the whole game moving at a reasonable speed and much of their time has been spent recoding the graphics engine from scratch. One advantage of rewriting the game (as opposed to recycling whole chunks of the original PC code) is that the team have been able to enhance certain game aspects and 'borrow' ideas from the PC's recently-upgraded Gunship 2000 V2.0.

Gunship 2000 is currently running at between five and ten frames a second, which is fairly impressive to say the least, and the improvements over the PC original are numerous, as Kevin explains. "The crew members and commanders of the other helicopters that you fly with have had their logic improved so that they react more realistically. The artificial intelligence of the enemy has also been tweaked so that they too act more logically to various situations. We are also currently working on the actual landing of the helicopter so that it will be possible to land on suitable hills at the correct angles - just as you can in real combat situations".

Like Knights of the Sky, Gunship 2000 will cater for inexperienced pilots with the option of an 'Easy Flight' mode. You won't need to wade through a huge front end (although there's a wealth of options and menus that alter any aspect of the simulation if you wish) and after only a few key presses you can be in the air. The controls are fairly simple, too, with a choice of the four main control methods (mouse, keyboard, digital joystick and even an analogue joystick) available at any time.

There is a strong 'personality' theme throughout the game and there are a number of people to identify with and form a 'bond'. "At first you need to fly a number of solo missions before you do actually fly with anybody", claims Kevin, "but after these battles have been successfully completed a squadron crew is introduced which you command and you can promote or award medals to the individuals as you see fit."





There are three detail level options present in Gunship 2000 which alter the amount of polygons that the landscape is constructed of. More polygons means more detail and less speed, and vice versa. Although the frame rate on the maximum setting is not slow, the lowest setting positively flies by.

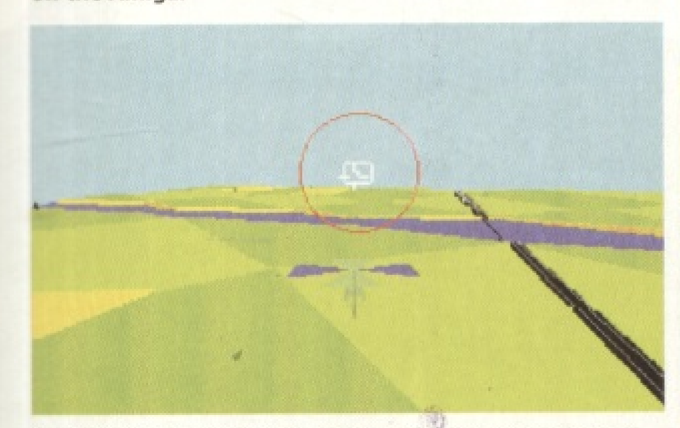
The game contains a number of scenarios (yes, including the usual Middle East ones) and they're hoping to include some more unusual Polar and City-based missions, although these features cannot be guaranteed at the moment. Kevin makes no bones about the fact that Gunship 2000 is more strategy orientated than Thunderhawk. In this game you can give orders to the other five members in your squadron which they will follow as best they can so it's possible to set complicated traps and ambushes - something missing from Core's simulation.

There are, at the moment, a total of six different helicopters to fly and each one handles slightly differently. "Each helicopter has its own characteristics and will come complete with their own sound effects which will further enhance the feeling of individuality. In real life every chopper has its own distinct sound which we're hoping to accurately translate. One helicopter may cut through the air with two blades, making a sort of a 'whooshing' noise [and, it has to be said, the accurate noise that Kevin then made with his mouth made me feel as if I was interviewing him in a Huey and I soon began to feel quite airsick] whereas other 'copters will make more of a 'thudding' sound."

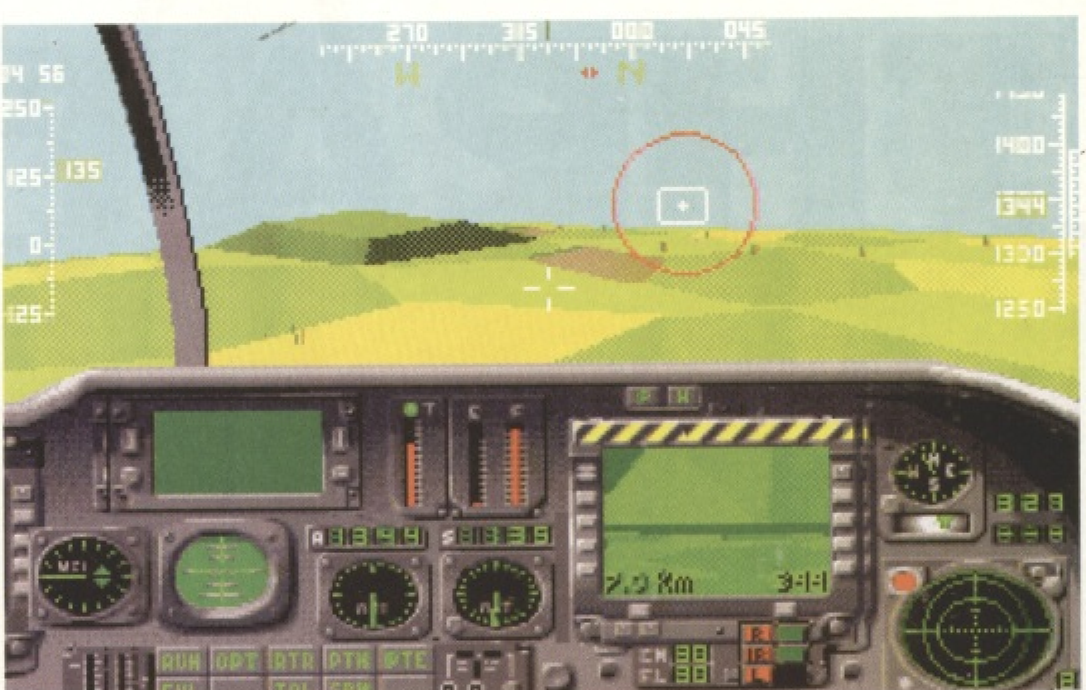
Microprose has built up a huge database of military information over the past few years and this was



The rolling landscape certainly adds a degree of realism to Gunship 2000 and makes you appreciate just how 'empty' some previous flight-sims were. This process was originally pioneered on the PC and therefore suited more to high-powered machines but the programming team have managed to keep the speed surprisingly fast on the Amiga.



Gunship 2000 contains all the usual external views but Kevin has added an extra one, just for good measure. When you are locked on to an enemy the as yet unnamed view tracks the target, following just slightly behind. This means that when the enemy swoops and climbs, the camera will follow wherever the target moves, giving some pretty impressive shots - a bit like being on a rollercoaster, really.



The display in the cockpit contains an excellent target camera which gives an accurate display of the enemy that is currently being aimed at. This can be turned on or off and even the level of detail that the enemy is displayed in can be adjusted.

f things to come

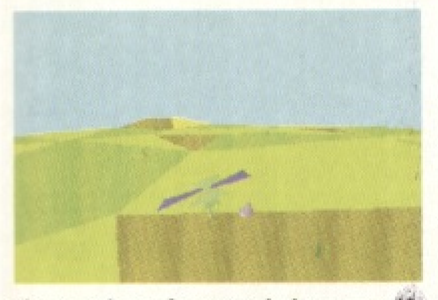
a great help to the programmers when trying to work out the different 'handling' of each chopper. "What we've basically done is study the text book definitions of all the helicopters featured and implemented the differences as best we could. There is, obviously, only so much each particular 'copter can carry and they all act differently when carrying various loads."

The landscape is pretty unique and there is a fair amount of movement on the ground with enemy vehicles and trains ferrying to and fro. Although the game slows down slightly when there is a fair amount of action, Kevin is confident that the number of detail levels will strike a happy balance between graphics and speed. "There are different options for both scenery and object detail and the whole program is adjustable right down to the camera detail on the control panel," comments Kevin. "We're hoping that most people will be able to find an acceptable configuration that will optimise their enjoyment of the game.

"The actual terrain is fairly different to most that you'll come across in 'ordinary' simulations in that it's a kind of 'rolling landscape'. That means that instead of the situation in, say, Knights of the Sky where you had a flat landscape with a couple of hills here and there, Gunship 2000 contains a smoothly scrolling landscape which gradually gains and loses height over the varying dips and bumps. You may not actually think you're losing height while you're flying level but your altitude is changing all the time over the different heights of the ground. So rather than a flat landscape with objects plonked on it, what you get here is a realistic undulating terrain."

"You need a sense of achievement when you've finally downed an enemy in a dogfight but it doesn't necessarily mean the game needs to be really difficult (and frustrating)."

Kevin Buckner
Gunship 2000 Programmer



The number of external views are, if nothing else, useful for fully appreciating the rolling landscape effect. Whilst it is theoretically possible to fly the helicopter from these views it is unadvisable due to the lack of instruments and general information found in the cockpit.

Although much has been said about the rather unique 'mission builder' which would have allowed complete and unique missions to be generated from scratch, Kevin thinks that, unfortunately, this feature will not be included in the final version before its release in time for Christmas as there simply isn't enough time. However, it may make it to the possible sequel. The Automatic-Pilot facility has been successfully implemented, though, which means that you can just set your destination and watch the baby fly itself. There may not be quite enough time to pop out and make a cup of tea though, as control will be automatically switched back to manual if any enemy threat is sensed with an audible warning to further alert the player. There is also a rather neat 'Terrain Dodging' feature which will, when activated, automatically maintain your height over the mountains."

Kevin is satisfied that Gunship 2000 will blow all other helicopter flight simulations out of the skies. "At the end of the day, what we have tried to do is make the game essentially fun. We don't want to make it one-hundred percent realistic and we don't want people to get shot out of the sky as soon as they take off. You need a sense of achievement when you've finally downed an enemy in a dogfight but it doesn't necessarily mean the game needs to be really difficult (and frustrating). That's not to say that the game will be easy, though..."

The fine job that the programming team have done is evident when comparing the Amiga version to the PC. The game is running at almost the same speed and the enhancements found in Gunship 2000 on the Amiga (that are only present in the PC's sequel) will make this first foreray into the Gunship world an even better one for us than those boring IBM people experienced.

THE DARK

Deep in darkest Derby, preparations are underway to shake up the isometric-3D adventure genre with Darkmere. Billed as the game "Cadaver wasn't", Arcane Developments intend to inject new life into old Ultimate-style gameplay. Simon Byron took an Intercity trip up to meet the men behind the legend that will, in time, become Darkmere.



Deep in the heart of the Orc Caverns Ebryn finds himself in yet another brawl. The programming team are hoping to include flickering flames in the pit down below to give a real feeling of depth to the chasms. Ebryn can perform three attacking moves and one defensive move so there is a fair bit more to combat than just stabbing at the firebutton. The two energy bars on either side of the screen show that the pair are fairly evenly matched at this stage so there is a lot of fighting work to be done here.

The idea for Darkmere has been floating around for a couple of years now, although the game has only really been in development for eight months.

In essence it's an arcade adventure mixed with RPG elements, set in a medieval fantasy world. The Darkmere of the title is a malevolent black cloud which, for some strange reason, acts as a magnet for evil. As the cloud drifts across the countryside it attracts all the scum - thieves, brigands and, worst of all, orcs - leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. The King of this fantasy realm, who is naturally not too chuffed at all this mayhem upsetting his civilians, sends his only son Ebryn to sort out the fearsome fog.

Possessing only an Elven sword, which glows whenever an enemy is approaching, and a magical crystal from which help can be summoned five times during the game, the player must guide Ebryn through mysterious locations and solve fiendish puzzles in an effort to eventually rid the kingdom of the Darkmere.

Mark Jones, the game's designer, came up with the original storyline which, as he freely admits, has been influenced by The Hobbit and similar books. He wanted to create a believable, life-like Middle Earth-ish world which would draw players in and capture their imaginations. Whilst looking a touch like Cadaver, the boys stress that this game is far more involved. "There was just too much time spent aimlessly wandering around in Cadaver", reckons Steve. "There was no interaction with other characters and the action was not as 'fighting'-based as Darkmere can be. Our game is far more visually exciting with every screen having animated backgrounds, things which will help hold the attention of the player".

The isometric-3D genre has become somewhat stale recently. The last decent game of this type on the Amiga was Ocean's Head Over Heels, which was immensely popular even if the puzzles and storyline were decidedly 'eighties'. Nostalgia probably had a lot to do with its success, reminding all the older gamers of those hazy days when Ultimate ruled and games such as Knightlore were king. Whilst there's no denying the excellence of the old 8-bit isometrics, they probably wouldn't stand up too well in today's market. Players have



Combat is an important aspect of the game and here Ebryn is thrashing around with his magic Eleven sword. Vultures swoop from the skies to pick loose pieces of flesh from the bodies of slain characters.



FANTASTIC

PROJECT: Darkmere
PUBLISHER: Core Design
DEVELOPER: Arcane Developments -
Steve Iles (Manager/Producer)
Mark Jones (Design, Graphics)
Paul Hodgson (Programmer)
Andrew Buchanan (Programmer)
Stewart Gilray (Programmer)
INITIATED: February 1992
RELEASE: Christmas 1992





The temple is packed with action and a good deal of quick thinking needs to be done if the gorgeous young lady is to be saved. Again, sound will play an important part on this screen with ear-piercing screams shattering the silence. The programming team have specifically created special sound effects for all the screens and, coupled with the immense amount of animation, should see Darkmere setting a new standard by which other arcade adventures will be judged.

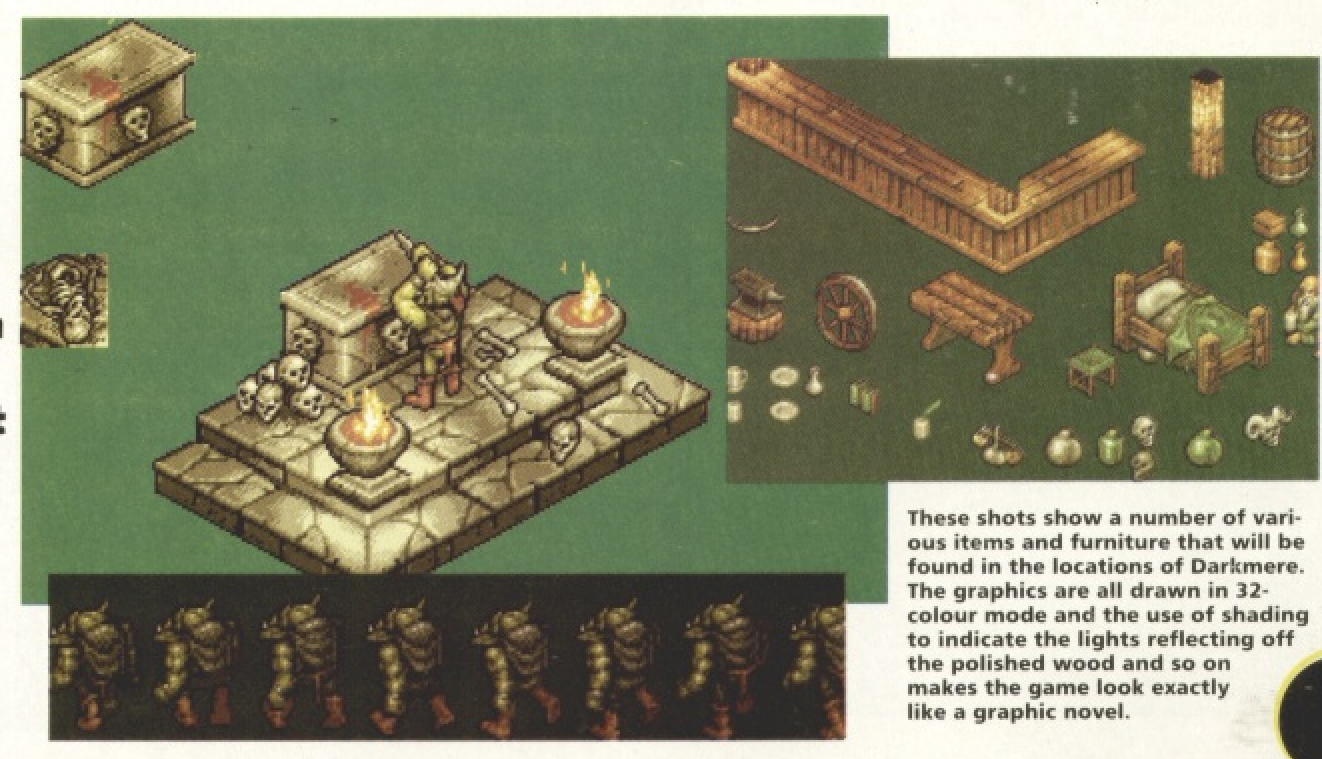
become more sophisticated and demand more complexity and depth in their games.

Darkmere's designers intend to improve upon the typical 'pick up vase, move to another location, place the vase on a block, etc, etc' puzzle by introducing a far more interactive style of play. As Mark explains, "Darkmere can be played in two ways, with the emphasis either on traditional adventuring or on combat. The balance is up to you. For example, in one puzzle you need to take some meat to a certain character. Meat can either be obtained by killing rabbits or by purchasing it from somewhere, which will obviously involve obtaining money either by robbing or stealing.

"These missions often don't turn out to be straightforward and it is this mesh of sub-plots that, we think, will make Darkmere a joy to play. What we've also tried to do is make sure that every puzzle is solvable in two ways or in a combination of the two styles. Although there are people that you've got to kill and puzzles you need to use your brain on, we've tried to make the game as flexible to your own particular playing style as possible."

The game begins with Ebryn in the middle of a village, his task ahead unknown. There are three

"All these sound effects should actually spook the player and really draw them into the game and, coupled with the actual gameplay, make it far more realistic than similar games we've seen."
Mark Jones
Darkmere Designer



These shots show a number of various items and furniture that will be found in the locations of Darkmere. The graphics are all drawn in 32-colour mode and the use of shading to indicate the lights reflecting off the polished wood and so on makes the game look exactly like a graphic novel.

main areas of play, the aforementioned village, a forest and finally Orc Caverns, each containing over 150 isometric-3D locations. The villagers are a mixed bunch, some helpful, others just plain mad, and it is via conversation with them that the various sub-missions are revealed. Conversations are initiated by selecting a 'topic' to talk about from a menu. At first the player only knows three topics - Orcs, Darkmere and Malthar (an old magician friend of the King's who will offer help when found) - but once conversations are started key words in the responses will be added to the topics menu and can be talked about further.

It is the graphics and more specifically the sound in Darkmere which will impress most people. There are sounds effects for most situations - winds howl, waterfalls roar, chairs squeak, music plays, the list is almost endless. Arcane believe that sound is an often overlooked aspect of games but Darkmere contains over 100K's worth of sampled sound in each level. If the player is a few screens from a fight or an attack then the sound of screaming will at first be very quiet, building up until, when only one screen away, the effect is at full volume.

Although there is no actual speech in the game, audible murmuring can be heard in the many public houses in the village. "Unfortunately there was just no memory left for speech", explains Mark. "The game is already packed to the brim with graphics and sound to convey the atmosphere we want. Cobbled streets will echo and bar signs will blow in the wind with an eerie creaking sound. All these sound effects should actually spook the player and really draw them into the game and, coupled with the actual gameplay, make it far more realistic than similar games we've seen.

"All these RPG's are very well as far as they go but who actually goes up to somebody and, having decided to fight them, throws a dice to see who wins? It's ridiculous! Our system actually relies on proper fighting moves. The energy of both characters involved in the dispute are displayed on-screen so you can decide whether it's worth taking the risk and fighting or accepting the easy way out and running for it".

"Although there are people that you've got to kill and puzzles you need to use your brain on, we've tried to make the game as flexible to your own particular playing style as possible."
Mark Jones
Darkmere Designer

The graphics are exceptional and the tiny animations of all the various backgrounds amazing. The images really do feel dark and moody and it is quite inspiring to see programmers taking such a 'realistic' attitude towards the artistry instead of opting for a more comical style of graphics which, although fine in their place, would certainly not belong in the seedy world of Darkmere.

All is not dark and depressing, though, as there are quite a few in-jokes for RPG fans (for example, one of the pubs is called the 'Tolk Inn', geddit?) and the game contains a fair amount of humour within the characters. There is an extremely scatter-brained old lady who'll spouts rubbish all the time whilst swinging on her rocking chair and a weapons enthusiast who sits on a bridge all day talking about nothing but swords and shields.

Mark is really happy with the way the game has progressed. "It has all turned out exactly as I'd planned it, although I would have originally liked longer to develop the game. I don't think that the time restrictions placed on us have meant that there is anything we have purposely omitted, there's just a few extra things that we haven't been able to add - nothing important that will detract from the way the game actually plays, though. And I do want to do a follow-up, so hopefully all those 'little things' will be included in that."

The inn is positively bustling with activity and, once again, all the individual characters are busy 'doing their own thing'. People smoke, drink, tap their feet and generally perform all the actions that you'd expect in a local, friendly (?) public-house. Whether the coders will have time to introduce a vomiting animation or sequence showing drunken blokes trying to get off with some of the beautiful women remains to be seen. Let's hope so.

Arcane Developments - the men behind Darkmere (from bottom, running clockwise): Steve Iles, Paul Hodgson, Andrew Buchanan, Mark Jones and Stewart Gilray.

(Below) We find ourselves in one of the more happier locations in the game, the Waterfall. Birds tweet, the waterfall gushes and generally this part of the forest looks like the ideal place to stop for a quick rest and maybe a spot of skinny-dipping.

Character interaction is another important part of the adventure - in fact, it's the only way to make progress. The cobbled streets are usually crowed with interesting people and a few meaty facts can be gleaned by asking the right questions. One thing that can't be made clear from these static shots is the amount of movement on the screen. Everybody in this shot will have an associated animation so that the place 'feels' like a real street. The attractive 'lady of the night' looks fascinating and I wouldn't mind a quick spot of 'interaction' with her!



As the world waits with bated breath, the team behind the chart-topping John Madden Football is busy converting another of Electronic Arts' Megadrive blockbusters to the Amiga. Desert Strike is the game everyone wants to see - but will it be worth the wait? Gary Whitta was airlifted to EA's Langley-based programming HQ to find out...

GULF PHWOAR!

In the Sega Megadrive market, Electronic Arts is in a unique position - unlike most console publishers, who are bound by cast-iron legal restrictions imposed by the hardware manufacturers that decree which games are fit for release and which aren't, EA has a 'privileged relationship' with Sega that grants them a great deal of freedom in games they can put out.

It's a position that has allowedEA to branch out and experiment with original titles that stand out from the usual platform dirge. Games like John Madden Football, Road Rash and, most notably, the superb helicopter-based blaster Desert Strike.

Based loosely on last year's conflict in the Gulf, and firstreleased while the bullets were still flying in Kuwait and Iraq, the game was, if you'll forgive the pun, a storming success - although it was criticised as insensitive by some for using the bloody desert campaign as the basis fora shoot-'em-up. Now that the Mother Of All Battles is long since over, Amiga Desert Strike's bound to be less controversial - but that shouldn't stop hordes of gamers flocking to snap it up. So impressive is the game's reputation that it's a strong contender for this year's coveted Christmas Number One spot .

Unsubtly subtitled Return to the Gulf, Desert Strike's story is disturbingly familiar - a crackpot Middle Eastern dictator is on the verge of obtaining nuclear capability and starting World War III, so Uncle Sam barges in, guns blazing, to put him in his place. The player takes the controls of a McDonnell-Douglas AH-64A Apache, flying the gunship deep into enemy territory to complete a series of increasingly complex missions. Objectives range from destroying airfields and SCUD missile sites to plugging oil wells (topical, eh?) and taking out the general himself.

It sounds conventional enough, but Desert Strike's neither a straight shoot-'em-up nor a serious military simulation, but rather an interesting mixture of the two. Anyone can pick it up and start blasting immediately, but it takes time to master the controls and learn to play properly - fuel, ammunition and armour is limited, and players must plan missions strategically if they're to be successful, rescuing stranded allies and winching up fresh supplies along the way. Enemies range from foot soldiers to tanks, SAM launchers, machine-gun jeeps and helicopters.

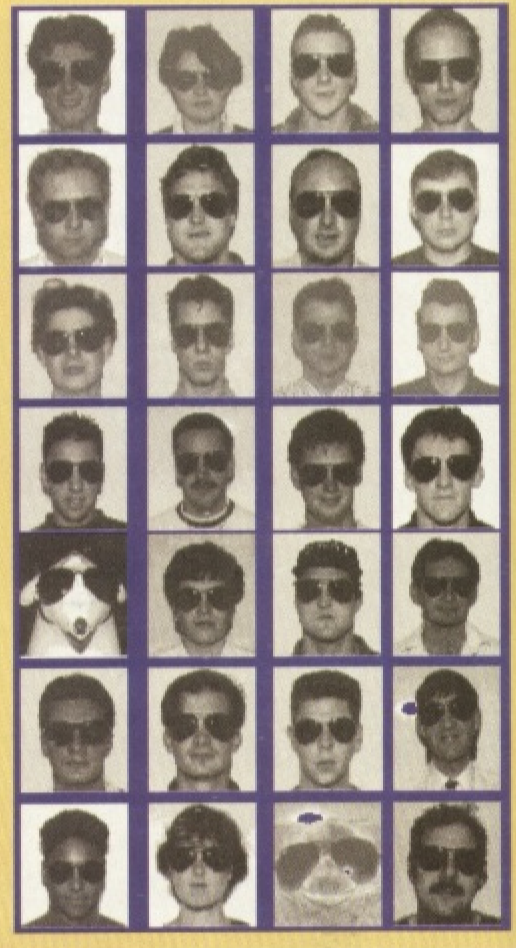
The team responsible for bringing Desert Strike to the Amiga is the samein-house team that did such a good job on John Madden Football last year. Headed up by Steve Wetherill and programmer Gary Roberts, they've been working since March and are now pulling out the stops to make sure the game's finished in time for its Christmas release. When the team was initially offered a choice of three projects for Amiga conversion - Desert Strike, Road Rash or EA Hockey - Gaz and the gang promptly plumped for Desert Strike. "We liked the look and feel of the game, it was different," Gary explains. "It's very close to real life as well."

So, how is our version going to stack up next to the impressive original? Well, because the Megadrive is better suited technically to run a fast-moving sprite-based game like Desert Strike, the Amiga version isn't quite as smooth as the original. The graphics animate at only half the frame rate - although when the game's in action it takes a trained eye to notice any real difference. "It's mainly due to the way that the Amiga's hardware works," Gary explains, "but the conversion is just as fast - things move at the same speed, it's just that they're not as smooth. But you don't really notice."

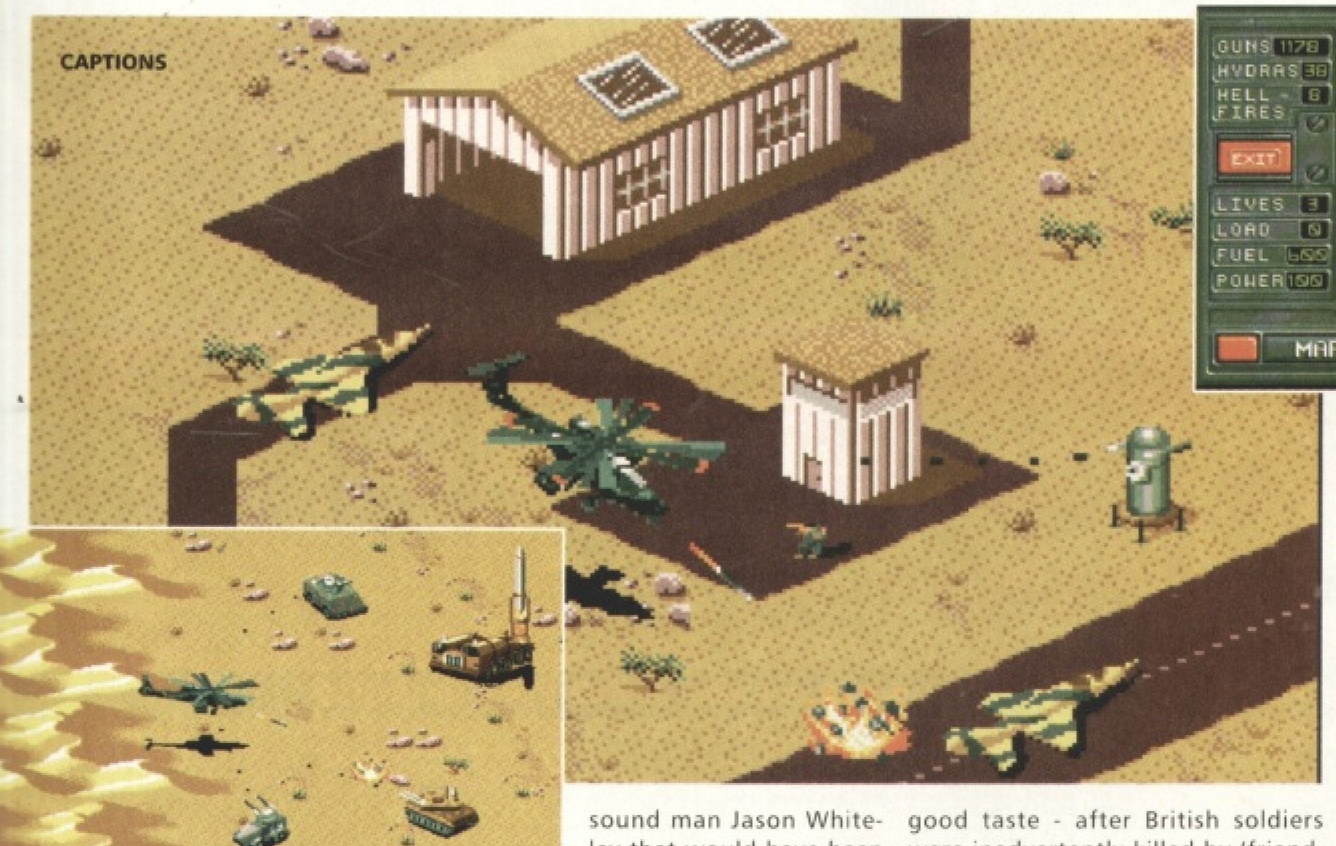
Apart from that, however, the team haven't had to compromise on anything - in fact, not content to simply port the game across, they've enhanced many of its aspects to take advantage of the Amiga's superior graphical and sound hardware. Although the original Megadrive authors supplied the team with all the graphics, including over 2000 animation frames, nothing has been simply converted over - instead, every sprite and background block



PROJECT: Desert Strike
PUBLISHER: Electronic Arts
DEVELOPER: In-house
Steve Wetherill (Project Manager)
Gary Roberts (Programming)
David Colclough (Programming)
Jason Whitely (Sound)
Carl Cropley (Graphics)
Damon Redmond (Graphics)
ASD (Intro animation)
INITIATED: March 1992
RELEASE: Christmas 1992







has been painstakingly redrawn with extra detail and in 64 colours. "We wanted it to look more like an Amiga game than a Sega game," says Gary.

The result is a game that looks noticeably better than the original - and it should sound better too, with all effects beefed up and sampled speech included to add to the atmosphere. Again, it would have been easy to translate Rob Hubbard's original theme music, but according to sound man Jason Whiteley that would have been "boring", and so everything is redone from scratch, using the Amiga's 4-channel chip.

As for the game itself, though, little is going to to change. "There isn't any reason to change the actual game, as it's good enough already," Steve explains. "If we wanted to we could change it off our own backs, but we wouldn't necessarily get US approval." There has been one minor gameplay change however, which has had to be made on grounds of good taste - after British soldiers were inadvertently killed by 'friendly fire' from American aircraft during the Gulf conflict, it's no longer possible for the player to shoot his own troop, which would no doubt have been considered insensitive. Some of the intro's more graphic torture scenes have been removed too.

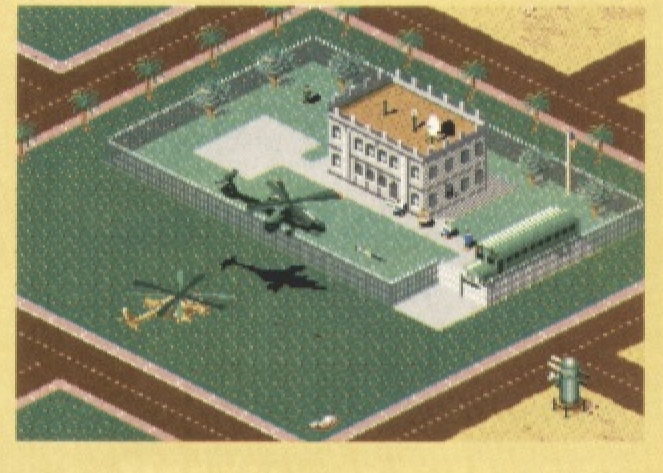
Amiga owners will instead get a new version of the intro and a disk featuring a special minute-long 3D animation showing an Apache and a Russian Mil-24 Hind dogfighting over the sand dunes. "There's much more presentation on the Amiga version," says Steve. "I think you can get away with less on the Megadrive. The Amiga market expects more."

Another pivotal aspect of the conversion is the new control method. Megadrive Desert Strike's sophisticated control is made easy by the 3-button joypad but for the Amiga the team have had to rethink the whole thing. "We've got three control methods, mouse, joystick and keyboard," Gary explains. "On joystick you use the keyboard to select weapons. With the mouse you don't need to touch the keyboard because there are two buttons. We've got the mouse control sorted out quite well, so hopefully most people will use it."

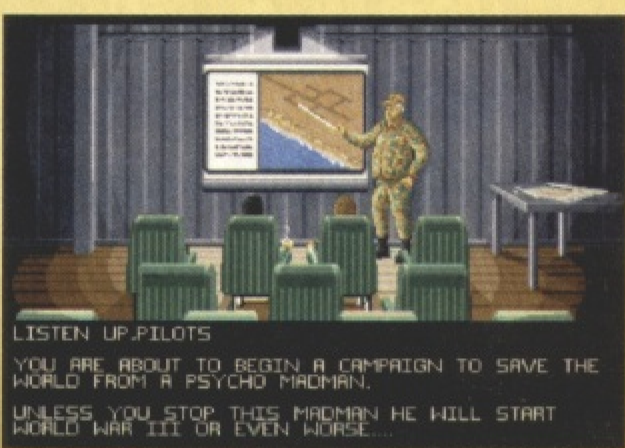
Having seen Desert Strike running on both machines, I predict that Amiga gamers will have something rather special to stick up the noses of their Megadrive-owning mates come Christmas. It's becoming increasingly heartening to see that anything consoles can do, the Amiga is still doing bigger, better and beefier...

"We liked the look and feel of Desert Strike, it was different. It's very close to real life as well."

Gary Roberts
Desert Strike Programmer





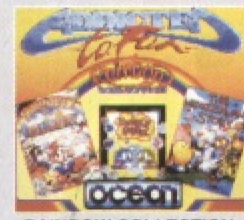




(Far left) One of the yet-to-be-finished frames from ASD's pre-game intro sequence.

(Left) The cameo pictures of the Apache co-pilots are actually EA office staff - the final shortlist will be selected from this motley crew of digitised mugshots - the inflatable sheep on the left is unlikely to be included, though.

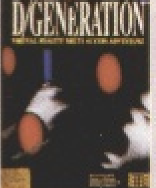
(Far right) The Desert Strike team - from left to right, David Colclough, Jason Whitely, Steve Wetherill and Gary Roberts.


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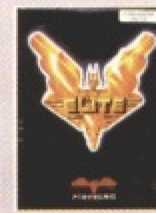

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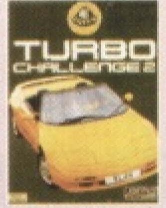
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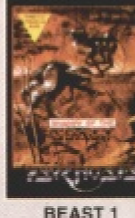

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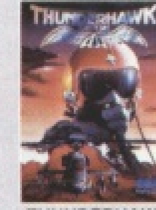

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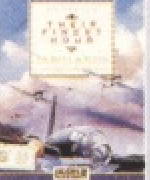

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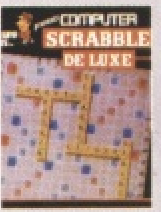

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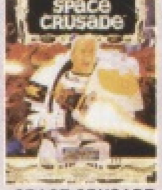

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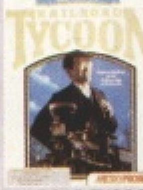
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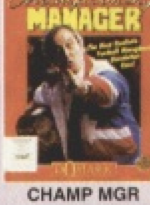

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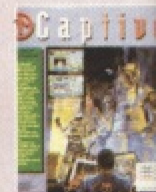

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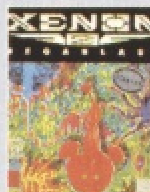

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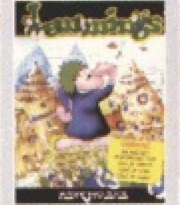
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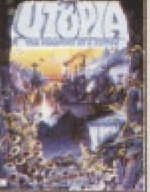
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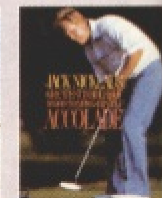

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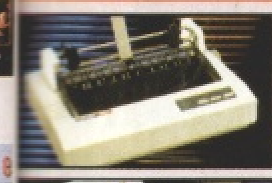
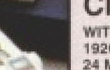
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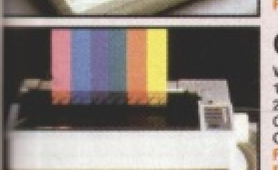
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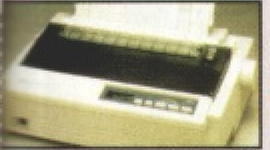
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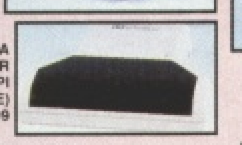
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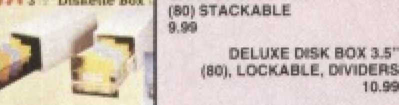


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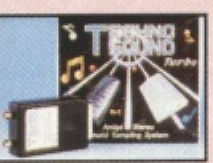
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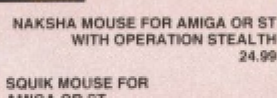
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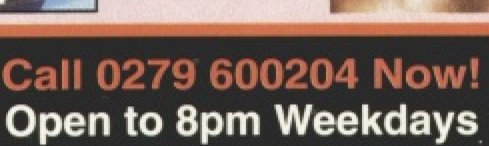


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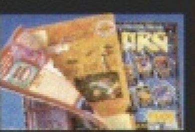


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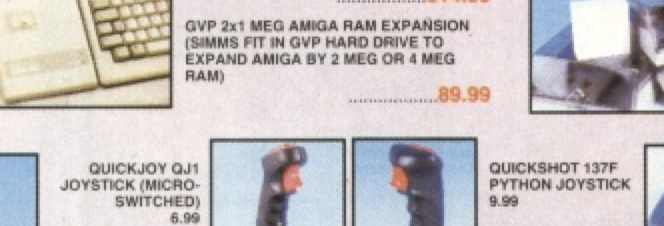
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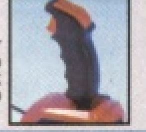
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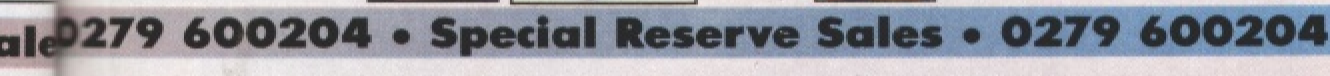
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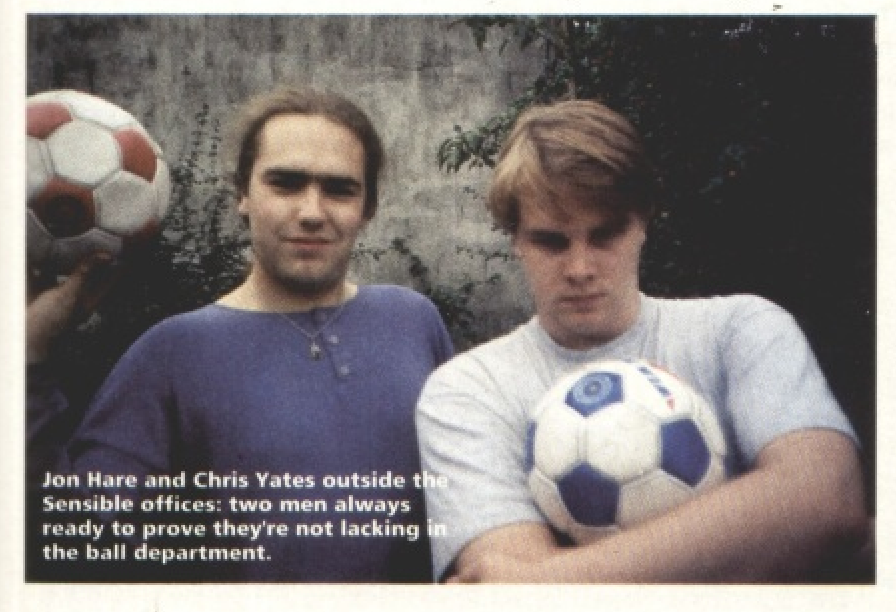
They have odd haircuts. Their first game was called Escape from Sainsburys. And with their latest, they've just become the software world's equivalent of Bryan Adams, staying at Number One for a record-breaking fifteen weeks. Just who ARE these people? Only Gary Whitta was silly enough to dare ask...



Sensible Software at Wembley Stadium, 30th March 1992. The team in full are, from left to right: Mr X, Stoo Cambridge, Captain Sensible, Richard Joseph, Dave Korn, Jon Hare, Chris Chapman, Chris Yates and Jools Jameson.

Just who the Hell do SENSIBLE SOFTWARE think they are?

Forget about the Bitmap Brothers - Sensible Software are probably the closest you'll get to real-life pop-stars in this industry. Let's look at the facts: they have heavy-metal haircuts; they can play musical instruments; and they're distinctly odd. Well not exactly odd, more sort of... flamboyant, really. In fact the only discernible difference between them and most of today's pop stars is that their products are actually quite good. Over the last few years they've been responsible for some of the best and most original software that the Commodore 64 and Amiga have seen - any C.V. that includes Wizball, The Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit, Mega-lo-Mania, Sensible Soccer and Wizkid is certainly not to be sniffed at.

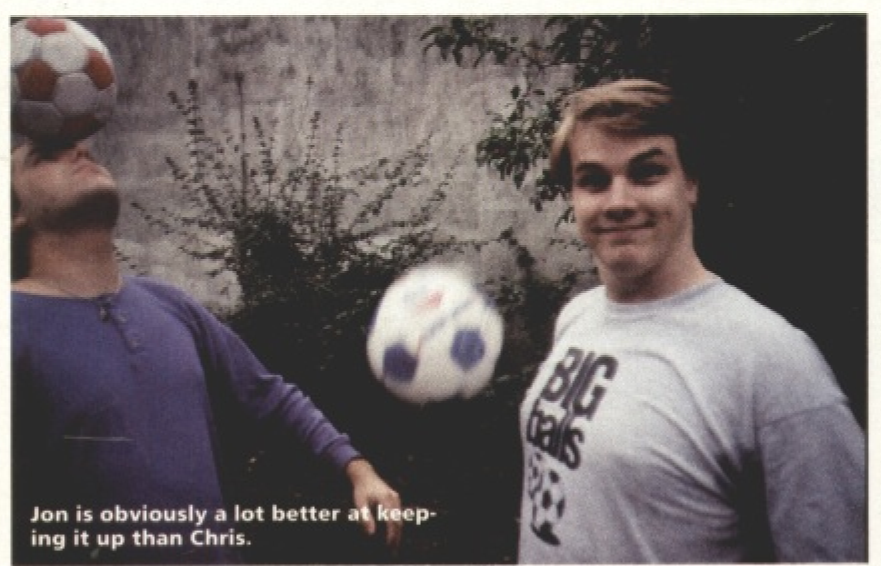


Jon Hare and Chris Yates outside the Sensible offices: two men always ready to prove they're not lacking in the ball department.

Sensible Software was formed by former schoolmates Jon Hare and Chris Yates in the Spring of 1986 - prior to that the long-haired duo (these days it's only Jon with the shaggy locks) tried their luck in the music biz with a number of - it has to be said - pretty unsuccessful rock bands. Their first band Deuce was as much a non-starter as those that followed it - namely Hamsterfish and Dark Globe - and it wasn't until their fourth attempt, with a band called Touchstone, that they were to get a whiff of stardom... until they discovered in an exposé on Breakfast TV that the 'promoter' who they had shot a video with was, in fact, a crook who had done a runner not just on them but on numerous other young hopefuls! The cad!

It was during these musical tinkerings that Chris first started to get interested in computers, gaining his first experiences by sending off for machines to mail order companies, playing with them on ten-day approval, and then sending them back. The duo's first game was Escape from Sainsburys, a text adventure in which the player was cast as a disenchanted shelf-stacker whose mission was to escape from the supermarket while avoiding the attentions of the suspicious supervisors. Unfortunately (but rather predictably), it never saw the light of day and it wasn't until Jon and Chris had knocked out some commercial work (including Sodov the Sorceror, a conversion of EA's Skyfox and versions of International Karate and Twister for System 3) that Sensible Software was officially formed on March 10th 1986. And the rest is sort of history.

Since then, Sensible Software has grown from just Chris and John to a company employing six and a half people (the half being freelance musician Richard Joseph) and with what are arguably the company's two best games out and about at the moment, the boys are enjoying a level of popularity not seen since their old glory days on the 64. And with no small amount of new titles in the pipeline, what better time to corner the two men that started it all and get some answers out of them? Answers to questions like...


Jon is obviously a lot better at keeping it up than Chris.

think they know how to do a good control mode but they don't. You know how when you're playing a game, sometimes you think "God, this feels really sticky, if they'd just speed it up a bit it'd be really good."

There's thousands of games like that, and that's what happens when people don't pay enough attention to the control system. 3D Tennis was the first game that we converted onto the Amiga in-house and it showed in the reviews, getting 80s and 90s. If you look at something that was done out of house, like Microprose Soccer, it didn't do nearly as well.

how well your game is selling, without just having to take it on trust. Renegade are very far advanced in their publisher/developer relationship. Basically, you're not patronised.

You've had quite a bit of bad luck with previous publishers, though.
JON: No more than anyone else has. I don't think we've been particularly unlucky. We're probably a good indication of what's average. But we've spoken to a few software houses recently, and they seem to be changing their attitude. Virgin have got a more liberal attitude, shall we say, than publishers have had in the past.

Do you think that any of your games have been at all influential?
JON: Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit was, I think, because it set a benchmark for what was sh*t and what was acceptable. I think it showed that you can't put out a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up as a full-price game, because they're just too easy to knock out.

There's a big difference between the quality of a commercial shoot-'em-up and the sort of thing that SEUCK can do though, isn't there?
CHRIS: Not on the 64 there isn't, but on the Amiga version, which we didn't do, it's very different. We've often thought about how nice SEUCK would be if we were to we-write it and to really do it properly. The Amiga version doesn't even have very smooth scrolling.
JON: I wrote the built-in games on both versions of SEUCK and definitely found it harder doing them for the Amiga. I shouldn't really be saying this, but we're not getting any money for the budget version, so who cares? The chugginess of it just makes it crap so it's not worth buying - especially when we're not getting any royalties.

A lot of the games that you've had converted to Amiga didn't come off quite right, did they?
CHRIS: Yeah, if you look at something like Wizball, the game itself actually played differently from the C64 version. People tend to convert what they see, but not what they play.
JON: You've got to remember though, our games are really finely tuned. If you look at something like Sensible Soccer, the control system is so finely tuned that just to alter it a little bit would fundamentally change the way that the game plays. A lot of people

"Normally when I look at a game, all I see is a list of things wrong with it. But even now when I look at SensiSoccer, even though it has its faults, it's got so much good playability in it..."

Chris Yates
Sensible Software

How have you found working with Renegade, as compared to other companies you've gone through before?
JON: They're a lot more open. They don't bullshit you - well, they might be bullshitting us, but if they are it's very convincing! You get to see everything that's going on, so you really believe

You tend not to put all your eggs in one basket.
CHRIS: The major reason behind not putting all out games with one publisher is so that, if one company goes down, we don't immediately lose 80% of our business. If anything, that's what we learned from Mirrorsoft.

SENSIBLE SOCCER: 1992/93 SEASON

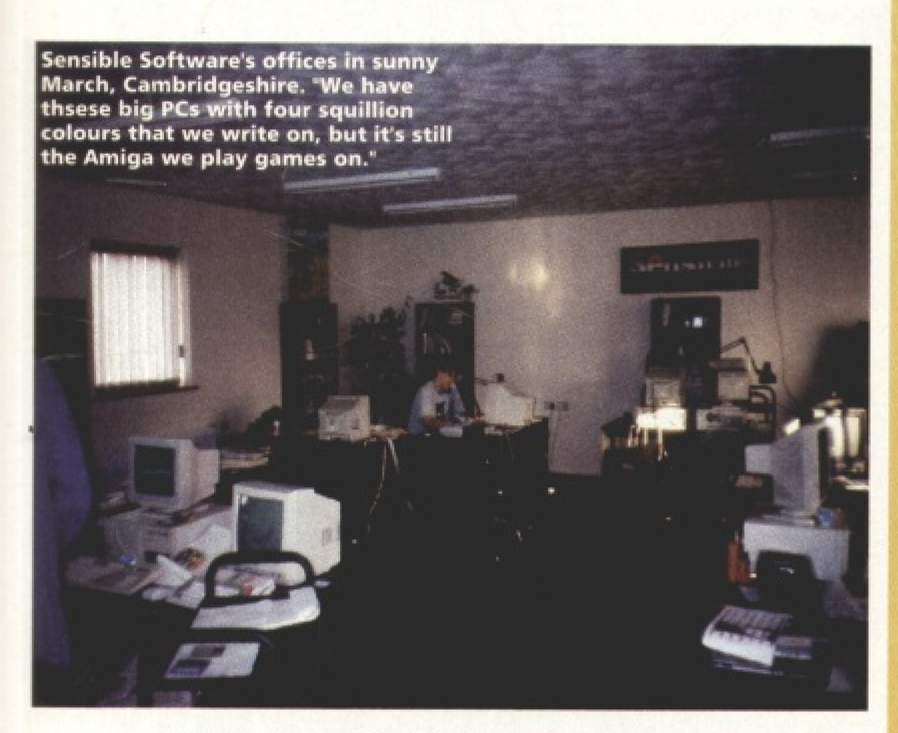
We got rather an overwhelming response to the piece last month on the new 1.1 version of Sensible Soccer, which is now officially called Sensible Soccer: 1992/92 Season. The team were still making changes at the time of writing, as now it's no longer just a case of improved goalkeepers. There's now a proper foul system, with the referee dishing out red and yellow cards for dodgy tackles. It's also possible - but not yet decided - that in league and championship games, a sending-off may make that player unavailable for the next game, as in real European competition.

In addition, the boys have also included the controversial new Backpass rule. So now, if the ball is kicked back to the keeper, he can't pick it up - he must boot it straight back out. The goalkeeper code has been revamped to take the new rule into account, so now the player can control the keeper like a normal player, dribbling the ball and even running down the pitch for an attack on goal! And of course the team and player changes for the new European season have been changed - so it's bye bye Tottenham and Arsenal, hello Leeds Utd, Sheffield Wednesday, Grasshopper Zurich (who they? - Ed) and, of course, Paul Gascoigne's Lazio among others, and a new batch of custom teams. The tournament modes have also been updated, with the World Cup Group Qualifiers being one of the more timely additions. The new version should be in the shops soon, with the £3.95 trade-in deal still going ahead - more details soon.









Sensible Software's offices in sunny March, Cambridgeshire. "We have thsese big PCs with four squillion colours that we write on, but it's still the Amiga we play games on."

Has your attitude changed at all over the years?

CHRIS: When we first started, the main thing was purely the joy of seeing our games out there. But now, it's started to slide more towards "we want our share."

JON: You do get to a stage where success alone is not enough. You start to resent the fact that someone else is making a lot of money out of you, and they aren't the people with the... extra special talent, if you like. I don't mean to be arrogant, but if you look at the really good games that are coming out now, you'll find that there are only a handful of people producing them. It's hard because these days games are a real team effort, and to get a decent software team together, you need a lot of people who are all very good at what they do. The exception to that is someone like Archer (Maclean), who's very good at EVERYTHING that he does.

What do you think of the general quality of Amiga software these days, as compared to say the old 8-bit games of the 80s? Have things got better or worse?

CHRIS: I think games today are a lot better. There used to be a time when a good C64 game was better than a good Amiga game, but that's all changed now. People have expanded into the space that the Amiga made.

JON: It's good to see that we're starting to get some really decent licences for the first time - ever. Like RoboCop 3, which was such a decent game that the fact that it had a licence attached to it was a bit of a novelty. It's good to see people making some effort with that kind of game, because there's nothing that annoys us more than seeing a really sh*t game with a big name sitting at the top of the charts.

How has the expansion of the Sensible team changed the way you work? Do you do things differently these days?

CHRIS: We have changed, yes. We tend to concentrate on one game intensely for a couple of hours, and then we'll leave it for the rest of the day and have a meeting or something.

JON: I think it's stimulating, working as part of a bigger team. If you're working as half of a two-man team, after four or five years you'll get a bit fed-up of seeing the same old person again. It's nice to have that interaction with other people - you're not so dependent on each other, because everybody helps out. Myself and Chris are effectively becoming like directors - not directors of a company, but directors of a film. Designing a game is like being a writer-director, whereas programming is more of an acting role. It's a bit of a sh*t analogy, I know...

How do the games get made? Do you plan everything out beforehand or just make it up as you go along?

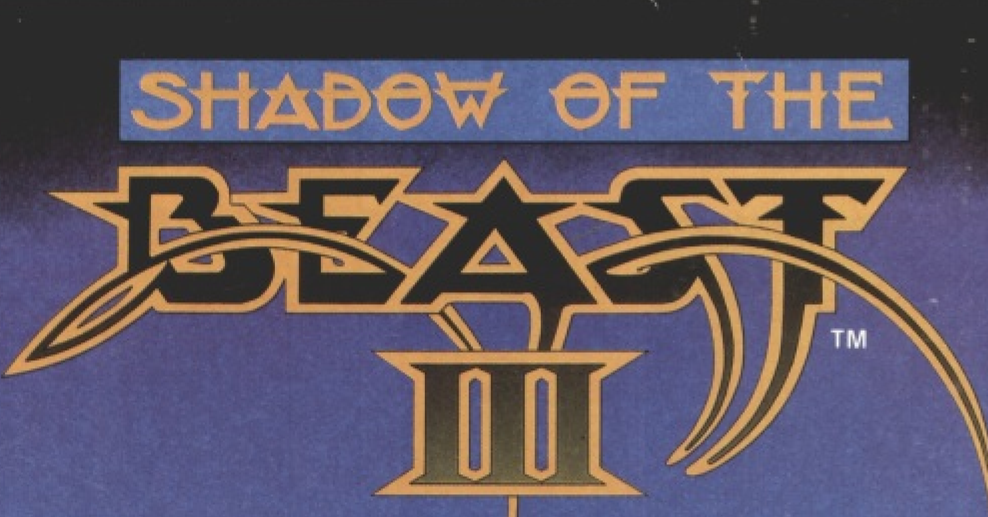
CHRIS: We plan the whole thing out when we start a game - and then throw it all away and then change things as we develop it.

So how close is something like Wizkid to your original conception of what it would be?

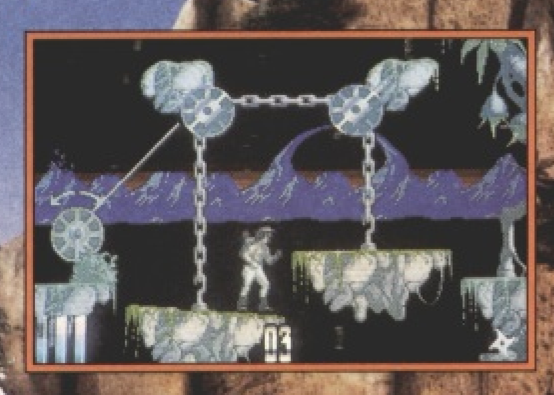
CHRIS: It's totally different. They're two different games.

JON: Probably about 10 or 15% of the original game design is in the finished version. The whole point is, the aim from the outset is to produce a decent game, not just stick to some plot that we've contrived. Most of the games that we've done, including Wizball and Mega-lo-Mania, have turned out

Continued on Page 45

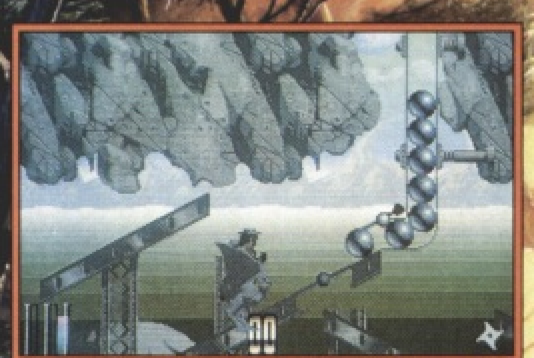


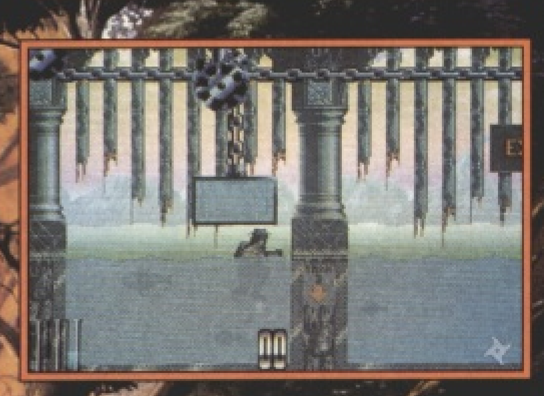












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Continued from Page 43


That Sensible Soccer team in full - Dave, Jon, Chris, Chris, RJ and the Captain.

"It's really fun to be able to do a game like Wizkid. It's like being naughty and getting away with it."

Jon Hare
Sensible Software

very different to the way that they were when we started them.

In Sensible Soccer, the control system - which is all you've really got in a football game - was totally different too. The only thing that stuck was the viewpoint and the scaling. In terms of how you kick the ball and all those things, that totally changed. And sometimes you have to take inspiration from other games, like the aftertouch in Kick Off 2. We tried various different systems to make that work, but it just seemed that the Kick Off system was the best one. If you look at the passing in Sensible Soccer as well, that's the same as Speedball 2.

After a while - and I think this is the skill that we've got - you have a vision of what an idea's going to look like and feel like before it goes in the game. That's the sort of thing you can only get through experience. Coming back to the original point, we always know when we start a game that at least half of it is going to get scrapped. We know it's going to happen, but it doesn't stop us designing it.

Have you been surprised by the level of success that you've had with Sensible Soccer?

JON: If we're at Number One again this Friday and we've actually beaten Bryan Adams, then it'll have exceeded expectations. But up to this point, no.

CHRIS: Jon's a big-headed b*****d. He expected it to sell four hundred million copies.

JON: No, no, that's not what I mean. Personally speaking, I'd always thought that it would be something nice to achieve, because I didn't think the game stood a hope in hell of doing it. But as the weeks have gone on and on and the game's still there at Number One, it's really nice. When it first went to Number One, we thought that it would maybe stay there for about three weeks if we were lucky.

What's been the secret of its success, do you think?

JON: Well, there's no competition out at the moment. Mind you... there is some. It's really weird what's happened, but I think the market's been dead for a long time. The European Championships, when the game first came out, seem like an age ago now. We'll be playing our first World Cup qualifier soon. And we'll still lose...

What was the thinking behind the new version of SensiSoccer?

CHRIS: We were sort of going to do it anyway and have an update of all the teams. But we had a lot of people write to us to say "Ooh, it would be really nice if you did this and that..." There were plenty of good ideas, and so we adopted some of them.

JON: We've got plans to do more with the game beyond Version 1.1 - and with the original version we had plans for a lot of things that we wanted to fit in, but we had to get it finished for the European Championships deadline.

CHRIS: We never had much time to play it, really, with the finished goalkeepers, only about one or two weeks.

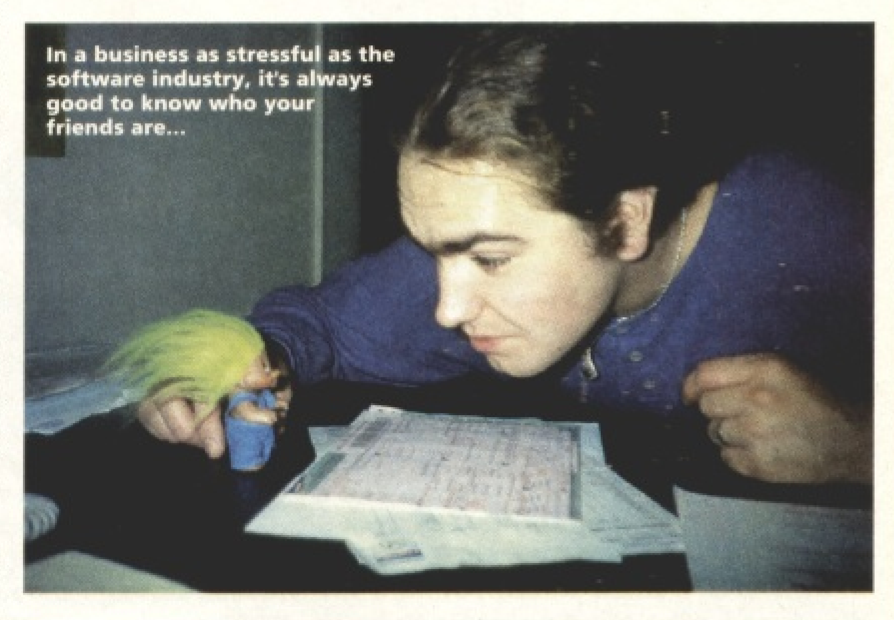
JON: They were continually being done during testing, that was the problem. Now, with V1.1, we've been able to add lots of new features, like red and yellow cards, and also the backpass rule and all the new European teams.

Aren't you slightly unhappy that you weren't able to put these features in the original game, and that you're only able to do them now?

JON: Not at all, look at how well the game has sold? How could it possibly be any better?

and stuff - it's not a whinge, it's just a fact of life - but it's like asking Terry Gilliam what's going to be in his next film. Odds on by the time it's finished, he's left half of it out. That's the way you work as a creator, you think of as many things as possible that you want to get in the game.

What happened with Soccer was we had a really rough physio thing going and we got to the stage where we had to make a decision - is this going to be done in time? The decision was no, it's not going to be finished, it's not going to be ready, it's not going to be right.


In a business as stressful as the software industry, it's always good to know who your friends are...

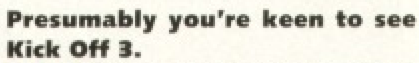
CHRIS: Normally when I look at a game, all I see is a list of things wrong with it. But even now when I look at Soccer, even though it has its faults, it's got so much good playability in it...

JON: To a certain extent also, you've got to look at what we do. People like yourselves ask for Work In Progresses



Even now, when the time is right to do the data disk, we're nowhere near getting the physio working as well as possible.

Our attitude's always been that if something's not working as well as possible, if a feature is really sh*t, then don't put it in. The headers, for example, weren't put in the game until the last day or two. They just happened to work first time, and if they hadn't there'd be no headers in there. As for the goalkeepers, okay, they've got their faults but they're still bloody good compared with the goalkeepers in 90% of soccer games.



Presumably you're keen to see Kick Off 3.

JON: Well, we're keen to see it fail. (Laughs) I don't know really, I think the competition will be good, in a way. The thing is, if Kick Off 3 does really well, all it will do is make more people keen to see another Sensible Soccer, don't you think?

How much pressure is there on you to do the sequel?

JON: I don't think we feel any pressure.

CHRIS: There's not really any, is there? We haven't 100% decided that we're going to do it anyway, have we?

JON: Well, we sort of have.

CHRIS: Have we?

JON: There are so many more things we can do with the game.

CHRIS: And we're not going to be limited by timescale this time. We're going to make it so perfect and wonderful that it's just going to be the bee's knees.

"People like yourselves ask for Work In Progresses and stuff but it's like asking Terry Gilliam what's going to be in his next film. Odds on by the time it's finished, he's left half of it out."

Jon Hare

Sensible Software

How do you see games going over the next couple of years?

CHRIS: I think that the consoles are going to come and go. They'll start to decline around 1995 and the Amiga will still be where it is now.

JON: Do you think so? The Amiga?

What about things like PC and CD?

CHRIS: That's going to be the second wave after consoles, the CD-based machines.

JON: The CD stuff has to develop, there's no market there at the moment and the development stuff is very hard to use at the moment. But once it's all up and running, providing people will still want to buy computer games by then, the games industry will move into a different gear. Consoles are just different machines, not a different type of software, which is what CD will be.

So then Jon, your team Norwich, eh? They've had a bit of a good start this year, haven't they? How do you rate their chances this season?

JON: Norwich always do badly over Christmas. I think they've had three good starts to the season in the last seven years. Give them until Christmas and if we're still up there then we'll have avoided relegation, which is one good thing. I'd like to say we're going to end top, but I think we'll probably end around fourth or fifth.

And a tip for the championship?

JON: It's not going to be Blackburn. I reckon it would well be someone like Arsenal.

CHRIS: Why wouldn't be Blackburn?

JON: Because they're [and here Jon said a very rude word indeed].

CANNON FODDER

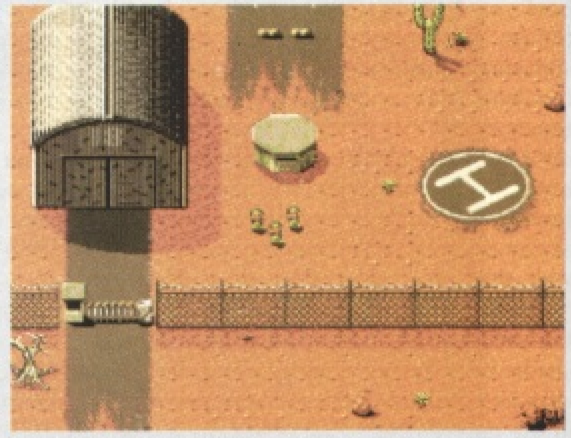
The next biggy from Sensible - coming in the New Year via Virgin Games - is, depending on who you speak to, sort of an extension of the ideas that first cropped up during the development of Mega-lo-Mania. To see it play in its current state, Cannon Fodder looks like a cross between Mega-lo-Mania, Lemmings and Dad's Army. The player is put in control of a small platoon of hard soldier types, who must progress through 100 independent phases, each set in its own landscape and each with a specific mission to complete. In simple terms, the player's force comes up against a computer-controlled enemy force, and the two kick the stuffing out of each other - in the most strategic possible sense, of course.

It looks (and, to some extent, plays) like an arcade game, but there are RPG-style elements - each member of the team has their own skills and abilities, built up by their experiences throughout the game. There's a wide range of weaponry at the ready, starting off with guns, grenades and mines and progressing up to the more wholesale carnage available with rocket launchers, tanks and helicopters, all fully controllable.

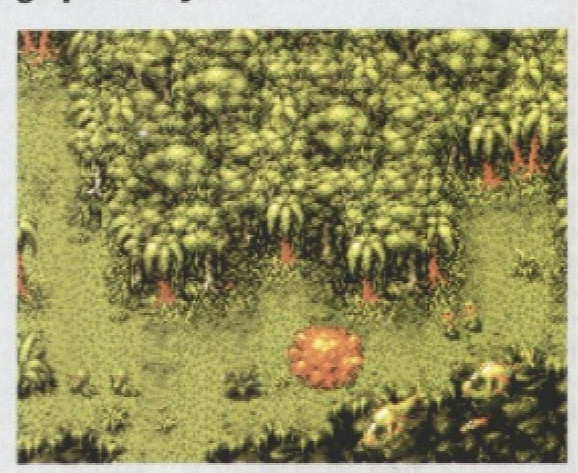
The military aspect has been played to the full - each squad member is promoted through the ranks as missions are completed, and the platoon can be split up into smaller teams or individuals, all of whom can be given army-style standing orders - shoot on sight, etc. In the finished article, missions will be set over a variety of terrain types, including jungles, icy regions, deserts and rocky wastelands. In the game's early current form, however (it was actually started a year ago, but left on the shelf for a while so that time could be devoted to more pressing projects), there's little to see and, true to Sensible's form, there's likely to be a LOT of big changes before the finished version goes out the door.

The moot point at the moment is whether the game will lean more towards the arcade or strategic side, and there's still a lot else to be decided and re-decided. Something that will definitely be worth keeping an eye on, though, is how the game will shape up against Rookies, a game also in development for Virgin, due for release around the same time and looking strangely familiar in gameplay and graphical style.









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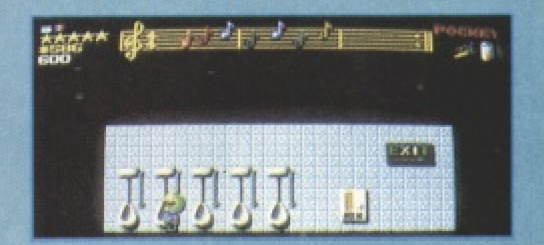
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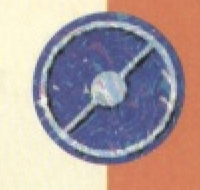
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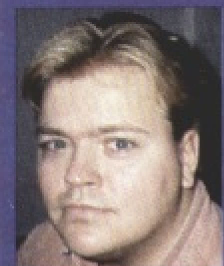
THE SCORES

All elements of our games are rated out of a possible maximum score of a hundred. But what do the scores actually mean?

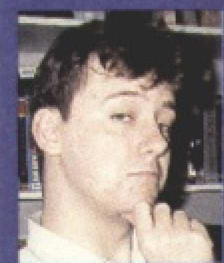
0-25	Rubbish. Offensively low quality.
26-49	Below average. Not acceptable by today's standards.
50-60	Above average. But still plenty of room for improvement.
61-70	Fair to good. Lots of nice points, but in no way perfect.
70-80	Pretty smart. Above accepted standards.
81-90	Extremely good. Top notch impressiveness.
90+	Simply excellent. Breathtaking.

THE OVERALL SCORE

Obviously, at the end of the day, when all is said and done, the Overall figure is the best gauge as to whether the game is any good or not. While representative of the elements, it is not an average of the other scores. That's why it isn't called THE AVERAGE.



DAVID UPCHURCH
Dave's well pleased with his past month's work. The work-machine we call 'tubby' has stretched his single braincell and written two (yes TWO) massive four-page reviews, and he doesn't mind who knows it. He's even taken to walking the backstreets of London wearing a sandwich-board, proclaiming himself the 'God Of All Reviewers' to anybody stupid enough to appear interested (which is nobody).



GARY WHITTA
Gary's also been 'hard at it' this month although quite what that 'it' is, nobody knows. Oh, and he went to see Patriot Games which, in his own words, is "excellent". He's currently trying to organise a trip to view Carry On Columbus but, unfortunately, no-one else will lower themselves to the depths that Gary constantly does. If anybody else is interested, though, then write to Gaz at the ususal address, please.



SIMON BYRON
The One's very own Worzel Gummidge was this month found to be sampling the delights of Legend of Kyrandia and Streetfighter II - both of which were so good they reduced him to a gibbering nonsensical mess. We probably wouldn't have noticed the transformation had someone else not pointed it out, but now he's snapped out of it, Simon is well on the road to recovery. According to Simon, his doctor has informed him that the only treatment is a prolonged course of tea, cakes and sitting around on the stairs - and like any good patient, he's obeying doctor's orders to the letter. Especially the bit about the stairs.



ROB CARTER
Rob's on holiday at the moment so he's doing about as much for the mag as he usually does. "Somewhere in Scotland" is what he told us so if you're up in the Highlands and you stumble across this very sad creature who looks like a member of the Shamen, please be so kind as to point him in the direction of the EMAP Towers. On second thoughts you'd better keep him.

THIS MONTH'S FAVES
The games that have heldped us make it through this issue with our sanity intact are, in no particular order, Sensible Soccer, Pinball Fantasies, Road Rash, Assassin and Speedball 2 (which Gaz is the best at, by the way).

Wing Commander



Have you got what it takes to save the Galaxy from alien scum? David Upchurch mutters "Red Five standing by" into his flight helmet and prepares to find out if he comes up to scratch...

Far into the future - the 27th Century, if we're being precise - a terrible war rages. The Kilrathi, a savage warrior race of cat-like aliens, have at last found a species with the furballs to stand up to them and, you guessed it, it's us humans. Our thin line of defence is provided by lone Star Carriers which cruise the border space between the Terran Confederation and the Kilrathi Empire, each of which is home to several squadrons of fighters and the pilots who fly them.

Aboard the Carrier Tiger's Claw, which patrols the notorious Vega Sector, is a rather special pilot - you! Along with your computer-controlled co-pilot buddies, you have to fly various missions and it's your performance in these that decides the future of mankind. Who will come out on top - the noble humans (hooray!) or the overgrown moggies (boo!)? Eight out of ten Kilrathi, who expressed a preference, said that they'd choose the latter option...

Wing Commander is the game that comes closest to being an 'interactive movie'. Animated cinematic sequences move the plot along between missions and the actual space combat is depicted using detailed bitmapped ships for greater realism, the end result being a game that really does look and feel like a top science-fiction movie.

When Wing Commander came out on PC it went down something of a storm... as long as you had a machine decked out with go-faster chips and a weighty hard drive. There's no doubt that it's the most ambitious PC-to-Amiga conversion yet. But can the Amiga cope? Well, here's where you find out!



(Top) Messages are constantly being transmitted back and forth between the ships. By calling up the comms screen and choosing between the multiple-choice options, you can tell your wingman to engage the enemy or break off, or request landing permission on the Tiger's Claw, or even taunt the Kilrathi with a few well-chosen insults.

(Above) Kilrathi pilots are not the only dangers you'll meet - these asteroids also pack a punch, and it takes skill to avoid them. You can set your ship on auto to do the boring job of flying you from nav point to nav point, and it'll slip straight back into manual control if you encounter enemies.







Apart from the standard view looking out over the nose of the ship, there are side and back views to simulate your head looking around the cockpit and a number of out-of-cockpit views, most of which actually aren't that helpful. The only time these work is when the game cuts to them automatically to highlight a particularly exciting or dramatic moment in the game (you know, you're ship exploding or something) - as an actual aid to playing they're not *that* useful.





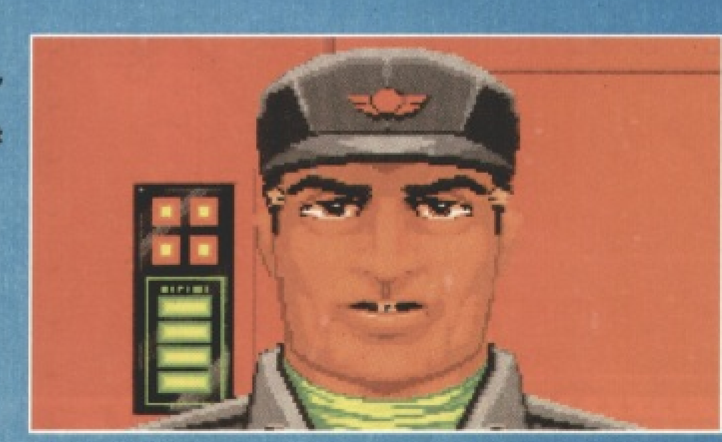


This is when Wing Commander is at its most exciting; you and your fellow pilots are locked in combat around a massive star destroyer or space station and, as you fly around the massive super-structure chasing the Kilrathi filth, you can see your comrades dogfighting (or should that be catfighting?) in the distance. It's all very reminiscent of classic *Star Wars*' moments.



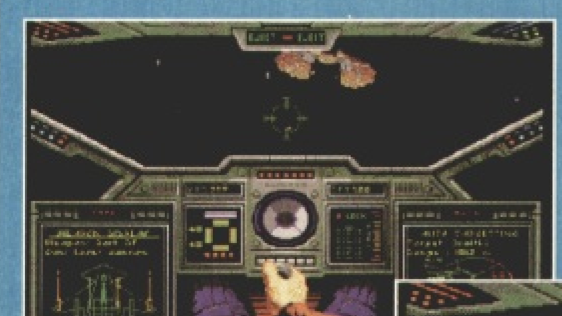
You're out of the Naval Academy now and assigned to the Tiger's Claw where real combat beckons. Your first mission is a simple patrol around the Enyo System. Shouldn't be too difficult, should it...?

Colonel Halcyon details the mission requirements. Basically, the simple rule is 'Don't fire unless you're fired upon'. Don't want any civilian casualties, after all.



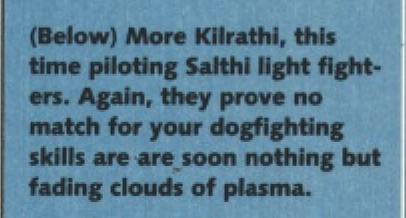
Scramble! Scramble! The pilots race through the ship's decks and into the docking bay. A quick pre-flight check and we're away!





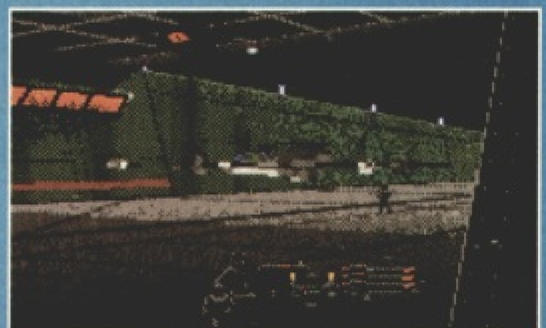
So far, so quiet. But as you approach the first Nav Point three Dralthi-class medium fighters intercept you! A short but sweet fight ensues and soon the Kilrathi pilots are eating vacuum...

(Below) Aaaiiee! Uncharted asteroids lie between Nav Points 2 and 3. Take evasive action NOW!



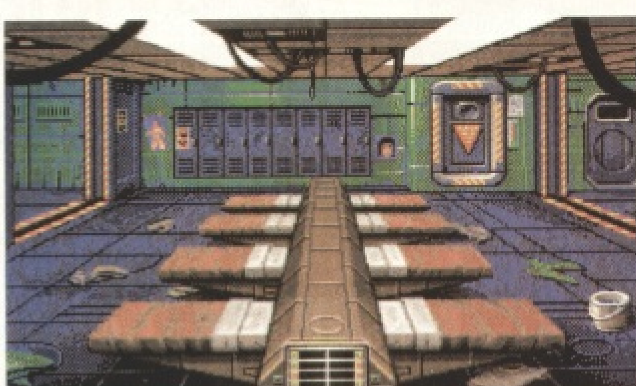
(Below) More Kilrathi, this time piloting Salthi light fighters. Again, they prove no match for your dogfighting skills are are soon nothing but fading clouds of plasma.





Battered, bruised but unbeaten you return to the Tiger's Claw. Hey, Kilrathi - anymore for anymore?





(Above) The early missions are simple sector patrol duties but later on you get to escort cargo ships and attack Kilrathi dreadnoughts. Sadly there are no missions set over planets, but the ones provided are plenty exciting enough so it's no loss.

(Left) The Tiger's Claw pilots' quarters doubles as the SAVE game screen. By clicking on an unoccupied bed you can save yor current game. Sleeping pilots represent saved games, and by clicking on them you can restart an old game.



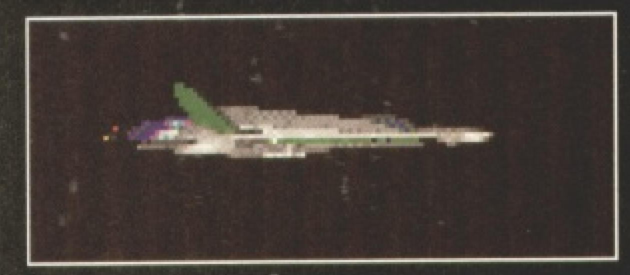


(Above) Death is always a tragic event, especially when it happens you. Once the Fleet manage to find your corpse (or what's left of it), there's a tear-jerking scene of your remains being jettisoned into space, complete with full military honours. You will, we hope, be missed. Alternatively, if you happen to perform especially well in your missions you may be lucky enough to be be awarded with a medal by your superiors, again depicted by a full animated sequence.

(Above) This navigation screen can be called up at any time during flight. It basically plots out the route you'll be taking through space on your current mission. You can also change navigational headings here, although generally speaking it's best to leave it all alone and just carry out the mission as you were instructed by your superiors. After all, you don't want to be court-martialled do you?

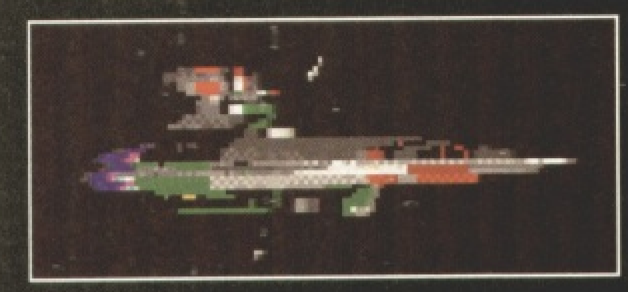
PILOTS! TO YOUR SHIPS!

As you progress through Wing Commander it's likely that at some point you'll get to pilot each of the four different Confederation fighter craft. Each fighter is fundamentally the same - they all have a radar, comms system, shields and a selection of armaments, including both lasers and missiles (dumb, homing and heat-seeking) - but their performances vary radically. And beware - being given a new ship isn't always a compliment, as some of these craft are real pigs to fly.



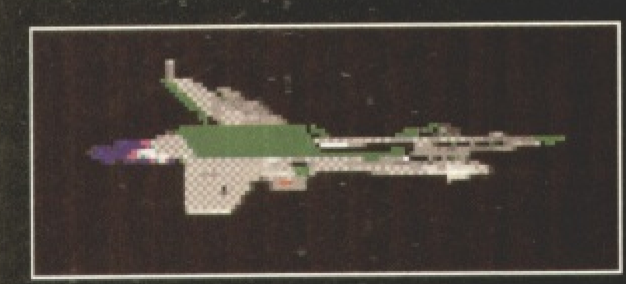
HORNET

This light fighter is essentially the beginner's ship and the first one you'll get to fly. It's nippy and manoeuvrable, but too lightly shielded and underarmed for any really big scraps.



SCIMITAR

Try to avoid getting saddled with a Scimitar, if you can. This medium-class fighter is the slowest of the lot, thinly shielded and even more thinly armed. A flying coffin, if you ask me.



RAPIER

My favourite ship, the Rapier is another medium fighter. It boasts the highest maximum velocity of the four ships available and is sufficiently well tooled-up and shielded to make it a good general-purpose fighter.



RAPTOR

This heavy fighter is probably the best ship for the coward. It's reasonably fast, but very heavily shielded and packs a punch that sends the Kilrathi flying into the next star system.



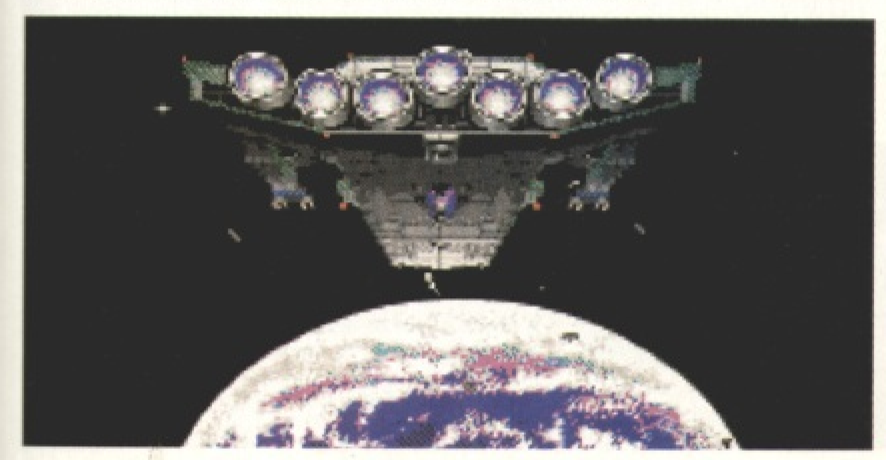


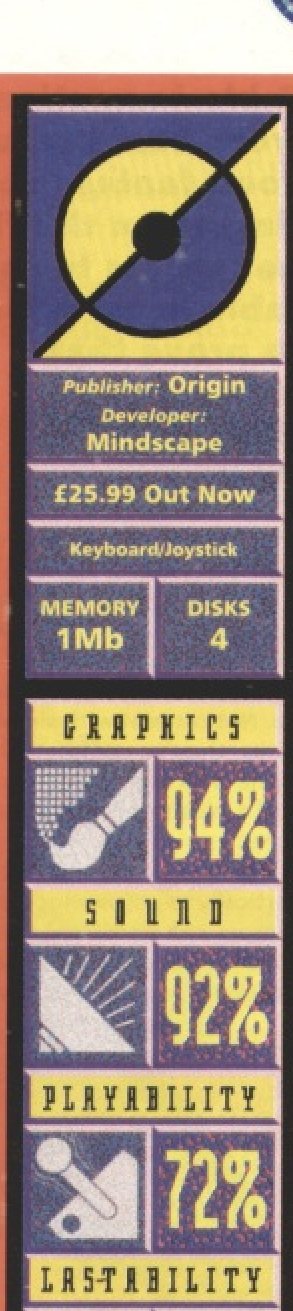


(Above) Before each mission the Carrier Commander gives the pilots a thorough briefing. Here's where you find out exactly where you're going and what you can expect to meet so pay attention. These animated sequences are great the first few times you see them but they do become a bit tiresome eventually. Fortunately you can 'fast forward' through them with a few taps of the ESCAPE key.



(Above) Between missions you can pay a visit to the bar. Here you meet pilots from other squadrons and you can chat to them about dogfight tactics and war developments. Once into a conversation you don't have a lot of say in how it goes - basically you just sit back and watch as your on-screen alter ego banters with his buddies. A bit more interaction with the people you meet wouldn't have gone amiss, it has to be said. Alternatively you can have a go on the bar's video game (shown in the bottom left corner of the screen). It's is a combat simulator and provides a good - and completely safe - chance for the novice pilot to brush up his flying skills. If you do well you can even leave your initials on the high-score table!





THE VERDICT

There's something about Wing Commander. Sure, it's great to look at and the music and FX are superb, but even the prettiest graphics and sweetest sound palls eventually. And, let's be honest, it's not the deepest game ever created (in essence it's just a glorified 3D shoot-'em-up) and it's not the toughest either; it certainly shouldn't take a decent player that long to finish it. So why do I find myself returning to play it time after time, even when I've completed it? I guess it's got something to do with the fact that WC (unfortunate abbreviation, that) really does feel like an 'interactive movie'. It's got simply bags of atmosphere and the player/viewer's level of involvement with the action on-screen can become incredible. After a few days you really start to form a bond with the pilots on the Tiger's Claw, so much so that losing a chum in a dogfight can be quite affecting. "This is all very well and good," I hear you cry, "but is it fast enough?". Well, the answer is: Yes, it is... but only just. There's no denying that what you've got with Wing Commander on the Amiga is a programming miracle, but the strain still shows - even when the screen is fairly empty the update is never that speedy. However, it's still fast enough to be playable and that, at the end of the day, is what really matters. Basically, the message is this: If you want Wing Commander on Amiga then here it is - nothing added, nothing taken away. However, anyone looking for high-speed thrills will be disappointed.

PINBALL FANTASIES

Table-top action returns in the latest sim from 21st Century. Simon Byron likes a good fantasy so with his fingers on the flippers he returns to the table in an effort to prove that he's a right 'Pinball Wizard'

Pinball Dreams went down a right storm earlier on in the year. A surprise hit, everyone knew that 21st Century wouldn't be foolish enough not to capitalise on the enthusiasm they'd drummed up. Not content with simply releasing data-disks, they've completely redesigned the game with four new and interesting tables and a wealth of not-included-before features.

The tables are presented the same as before with the screen scrolling vertically to accommodate the whole playing area. Once again up to eight players can participate in each game providing a real party-type atmosphere, especially when combined with a few beers. That's all there is to say, really, as when all's said and done it's a pinball game, okay?



This is the best table out of the four with many hidden features to be discovered. The arcade offers you the chance to play a fruit machine and racing around the ramp produces a nice 'loop' animation in the score panel. There's a hidden entrance in this table too, which can be used to get a massive points injection



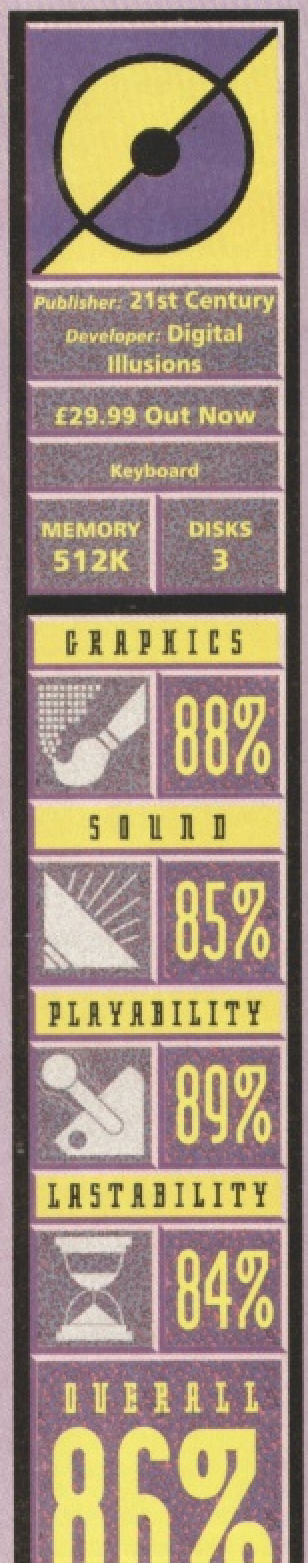
(Above) The Billion Dollar Gameshow gives you the chance to 'win' all manner of prizes from colour TVs to luxury cars and boats. What all this rubbish means, though, is more and more points. The centre pin just behind the flippers doesn't appear to be as effective as the one in Pinball Dreams so don't expect an easy ride on your way to earning that billion dollars.

THE VERDICT

I must admit to being a huge fan of Pinball Dreams so I was really looking forward to Fantasies. The big question is, of course, does it improve on the original? Well, to be honest with you I'm in two minds. The scoreboard - with its all-new 'pixely' effect - definitely looks better and the graphical displays that pop up are excellent. Sometimes, though, these messages are so lengthy (in game terms) that when they appear the first time you find yourself paying attention whilst the ball promptly disappears. Frustrating to say the least. What's the point in telling somebody that they now have a chance to go for a huge bonus when by scrolling the message slowly across the display the ball is already lost - meaning the bonus has to be re-earnt? Admittedly once the message has been seen once you're not likely to pay too much attention to it again but it is still mildy annoying. The extra flippers are a bonus and offer the extra challenge of the sideways 'loops' but some of the tables appear more cluttered due these extra obstacles and at times it can become unclear as to where the ball actually needs to go. These slight criticisms may sound harsh but they're not intended to be, after all the original gameplay is still all there and that's what made the first Pinball such a success. As to whether you should buy this if you already own the first game... Well, I'd say yes but only if you were really impressed by the first. Of course, if you don't own Pinball Dreams then this might be a fine time to discover what you missed.



Stones & Bones is an intriguing table. There are a multitude of large scores and hidden features to be earnt, including the 'kick back' which stops the ball falling down the left-hand flipper gulley.



Publisher: 21st Century
Developer: Digital Illusions
£29.99 Out Now
Keyboard

MEMORY	DISKS
512K	3

GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	85%
PLAYABILITY	89%
LASTABILITY	84%
OVERALL	86%

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FROM THE AUTHOR OF JIMMY WHITE'S WHIRLWIND SNOOKER

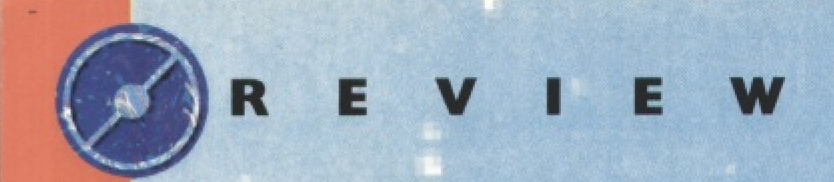
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SHADOWORLD

Having rocked the role-playing world with the blockbusting Shadowlands, Teque is back with a space-age sequel that should ring a few bells in the heads of Aliens fans. Gary Whitta's on a one-way elevator to Hell. Going down...

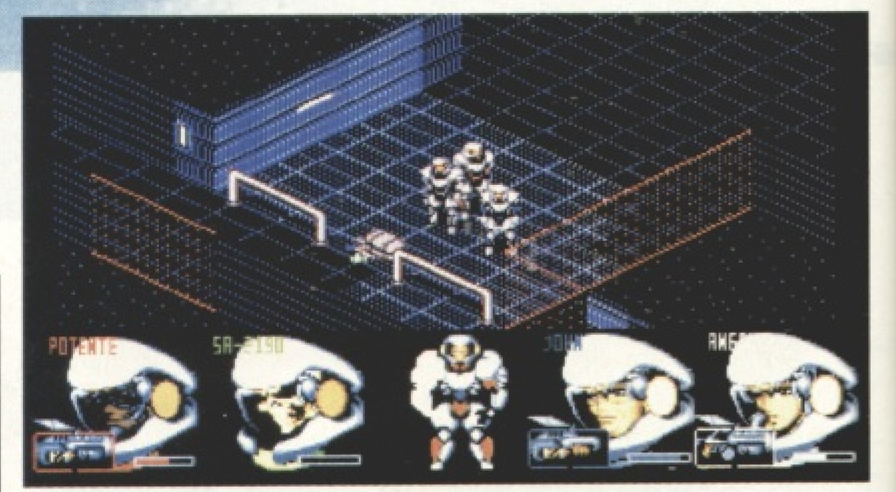
Shadowlands in space. Right, that's this game described. Next! (Don't push your luck - Ed.) Well, it sounds a bit blunt, but that's basically what we've got here. The isometric RPG produced for Domark by Teque last year turned more than its fair share of heads, mainly because it broke several sacred role-playing conventions by being easy to get into and understand (heaven forbid!) and, more to the point, a lot of fun.

By taking RPG depth and shoe-horning it into a format more suited for mass consumption (i.e. it looked more like an arcade game than a hefty role-player) Shadowlands also managed to hook a few people into a genre which is, for the most part, sadly neglected by the majority of Amiga players.

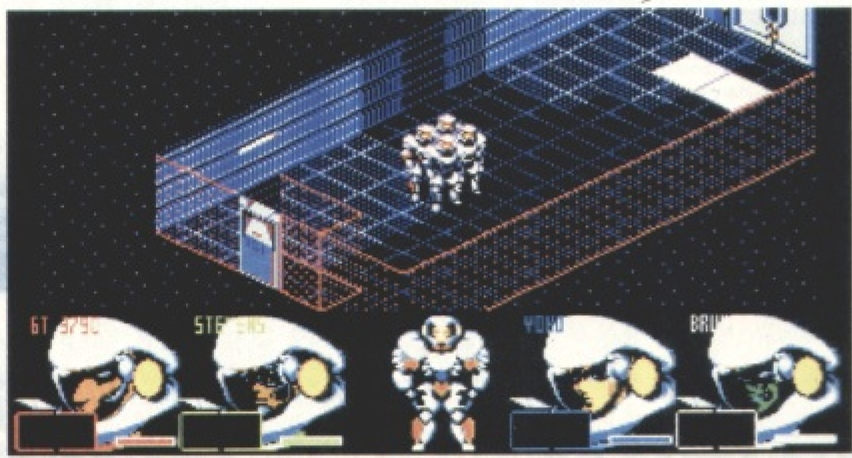
A sequel, then, is of course the order of the day. And while Shadoworlds is by no means an official follow-up (the scenarios of the two games couldn't be further removed if you tried), there can be no mistaking the game's origins. Using an improved version of the impressive Photoscape graphics system, Shadoworlds is set in the far future, after a galactic war so devastating has finally convinced humankind to renounce violence forever and embark upon a new era of universal peace.

But just in case, a single weapons research laboratory has been kept active at the far edge of the galaxy - and it's to here that you and your party of super-hard war veterans are sent to investigate when contact is mysteriously lost. Shades of Aliens certainly, but then that's pretty much the point. What happens next is anybody's guess...

The team of four space marines is selected from a mass of possible contenders. They're a distinctly varied bunch (there's a malfunctioning droid and a wolfman in the roster), with the only universal trait being that they're all pretty rough-n'-tough characters. Their all-important statistics are complemented by a short biog giving some indicators as to how the character may perform under pressure. As usual, it's best to go for a mix of styles and skills rather than just going in with, say, four hard-nosed but bird-brained killers.

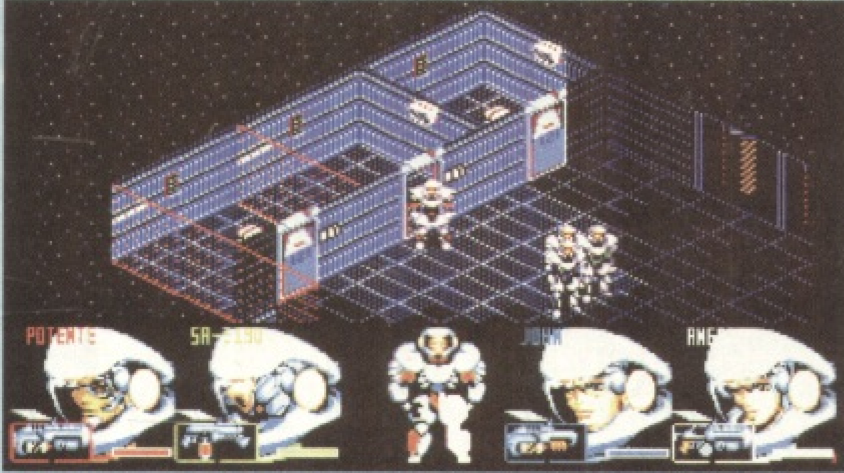


Once a pistol or rifle has been found, enemies can be taken on at long range. A nice touch is that the heavy weapons consist of two parts, the barrel and the stock, so players can customise their weaponry by connecting different parts to produce a range of different firing effects. It makes for a potentially huge array of weapons, if you're willing to experiment.

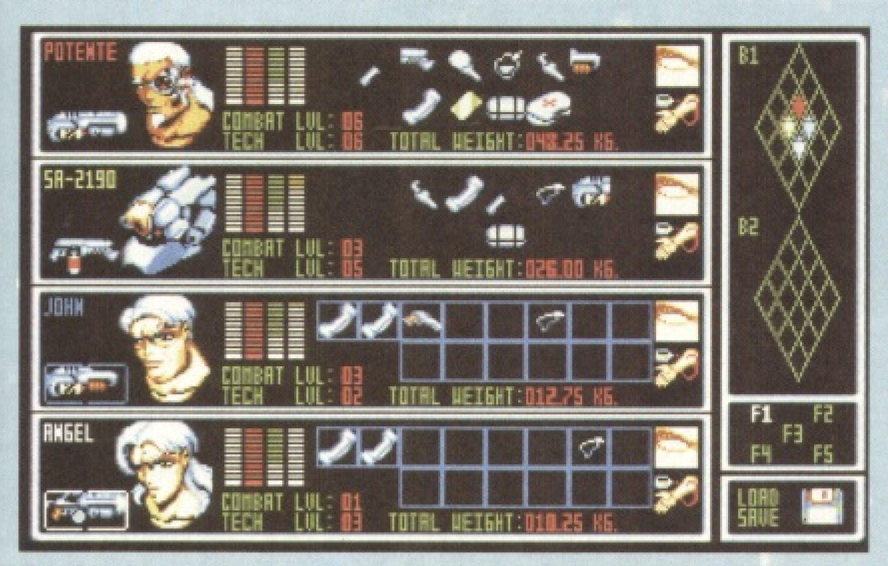


The four-man marine team beams into the space colony without any weaponry (this is an age of universal peace, remember?), so it's vital to find and equip the team with weapons as soon as possible. Light sabres, found near to the entry point in handily-discarded crates, are the basic 'tool', although their power is limited, and so suitable for only minor skirmishes with small robots.

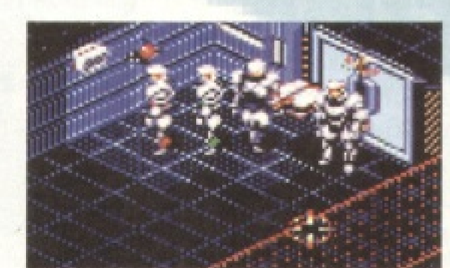
(Right) Computer screens set into the wall provide simple clues - you'd have to be a very dim role-player to not guess that pressing the touchpad on the wall next to the door might open it. In fact, there are plenty of switches and buttons to fiddle with, their purpose only becoming apparent once you've taken the plunge and pressed 'em...



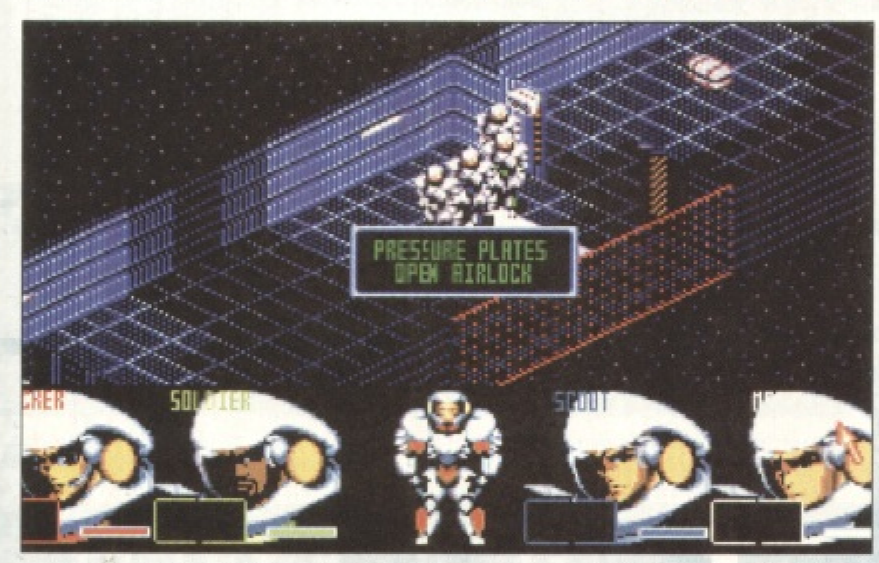
Shadowlands' rather pretty Photoscape system has been enhanced for Shadoworlds - instead of the first game's primitive torches, which cast just a pool of light, characters in Shadoworlds can cast a directional beam of light from a lamp set into their helmet. Light can be cast anywhere around the screen, so it's useful for trying to spot any traps that may be lurking in the darkness. Unfortunately, the helmet lamps only work when powered by the right battery, and they - you guessed it - have to be found first.



The ubiquitous inventory screen allows players to manipulate and examine objects, check stats and health levels, and re-organise the party. The four members of the team can be set up to move in any formation within a strategic diamond shape (right of the screen), or even split up into separate task forces which the player can issue orders to separately. Single party members can also wander off and explore, but they've got much less chance surviving on their own than they have with the rest of the team to back them up.



Security robots positioned strategically around the complex are programmed to attack intruders on sight - and that, of course, includes you. The small floating droids may sap your energy a bit, but they're essentially little more than light-sabre fodder. It's the larger robots and, later on, the more unsavoury adversaries that cause the problems...



THE VERDICT

As the sequel to Shadowlands, Shadoworlds is just about everything you'd expect - more of the same stylishly-presented role-playing fun, with a few notable enhancements and a suitably moody scenario. Indeed, the space-age setting is one of the game's strongest points, making a refreshing change from the usual unimaginative sword-n'-sorcery dirge. There can be no doubt that Teque have gone all out to recreate the brooding feel of James Cameron's Aliens here, and the ideally-suited Photoscape system has helped them pull it off to good effect although, as sophisticated as the system is, I'm still not convinced that it's as practical as it is attractive. There's a certain amount of frustration when much of the game is played in partial darkness, and there are times when you wish you could just light everything up and have done with it. If it's a really Alien-esque atmosphere that Teque were after, some rumbling background music and effects would have done the world of good - sadly there's little worthy of note on the sonic side. Regardless of that, Shadoworlds is undoubtedly a very polished, sophisticated and enjoyable role-player - and a big one too. If anything, it's more action orientated than Shadowlands, with more emphasis on combat and exploration than conventional puzzle-solving. I have a few gripes with the control method - it's not quite as friendly as you might be led to believe, particularly when moving the party about. They're not intelligent enough to walk to where you've clicked automatically, they have to be guided round objects and through doors, and this can seem like a chore at times. Because of Shadoworlds' slick presentation and its slight move away from the puzzle side of things, I think it's less likely to appeal to hardened RPG purists and more to unseasoned adventurers - it's swish scenario and friendly interface make it the ideal introduction to the genre. But that's not to say it's a pushover and if you liked Shadowlands (plenty of you, I know) you'll love this. Yes, it's a cliché but it also happens to be true. So there.



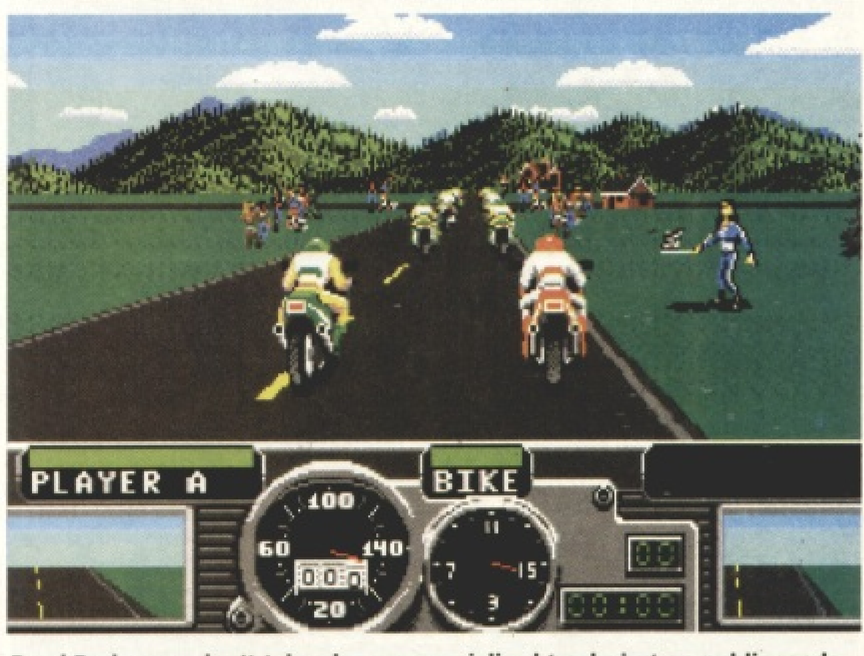
Motorbike racing with a hefty amount of cheating and violence thrown in is the name of the game in Electronic Arts' second Megadrive-to-Amiga conversion. Gary Whitta straddles the throbbing metal monster...



ROAD RASH

From the moment you turn to the totally unscrupulous first page in the instruction manual, it's instantly clear what sort of game Road Rash is. A motorcycle racing game, sure, but one where the object is to win no matter how devious the required tactics. The action - set around a ficticious pan-American bike racing tournament held every year between the country's meanest, dirtiest riders - is your basic arcade-style racer, but with one notable twist - it's possible (and entirely acceptable in the rule book) to clobber opposing riders and try to knock them, quite literally, out of the race.

There are five tracks across the United States and you have to race each one against fourteen other 'Rashers', advancing through the levels and accumulating prize money with which to buy faster, more powerful bikes. And so it goes round and round. The only problem is the constant threat of having your neck broken by a timely thump from a fellow racer or by falling foul of the maniac car-drivers who are trying to use the road too. Oh, and did we mention the cops that make the guys out of CHIPS look like Dixon of Dock Green? If you don't end up in hospital or in prison you might just come out of this a rich man...



Road Rash races don't take place on specialised tracks but on public roads far from the city. As such there isn't much in the way of roadside obstacles and so accidentally riding off the road, although it slows you down, needn't be fatal. There's always the chance that you'll hit some rogue cactus or bush, though, so stay tight on the corners and don't go drifting off.



Each of the five tracks differs slightly in length and terrain, but the object of each is the same - win! You can have as many attempts as you like, but you must finish fourth or better in all the races in order to qualify for the next, tougher level. As you progress through levels you race the same five tracks, but they get longer and the opponents and the cops get meaner.



Of the multitude of other Rashers on the road, there are about half a dozen colourful characters worth watching out for. Before each race one of them pops up with a brief message, either commenting on the last race, offering some tips for the next, or just shooting the breeze as these Californian types like to do. Alternatively, one of the motorcycle cops might turn up with a warning to watch your speed - if they do, it's a sure-fire bet they'll be there, keeping an eye on you during the race.



Fighting or, to give it its official name, brawling with other racers couldn't be easier. Simply ride up alongside your target and lash out with your fist or your foot. Some racers are tougher than others - each has their own energy level - and the tougher riders may take several hits in quick succession before they're finally dismounted. The basic idea is that although felled riders will get back on their bikes and continue racing, it costs them valuable seconds and so it's a much more effective way of moving up the pack than simply riding past.

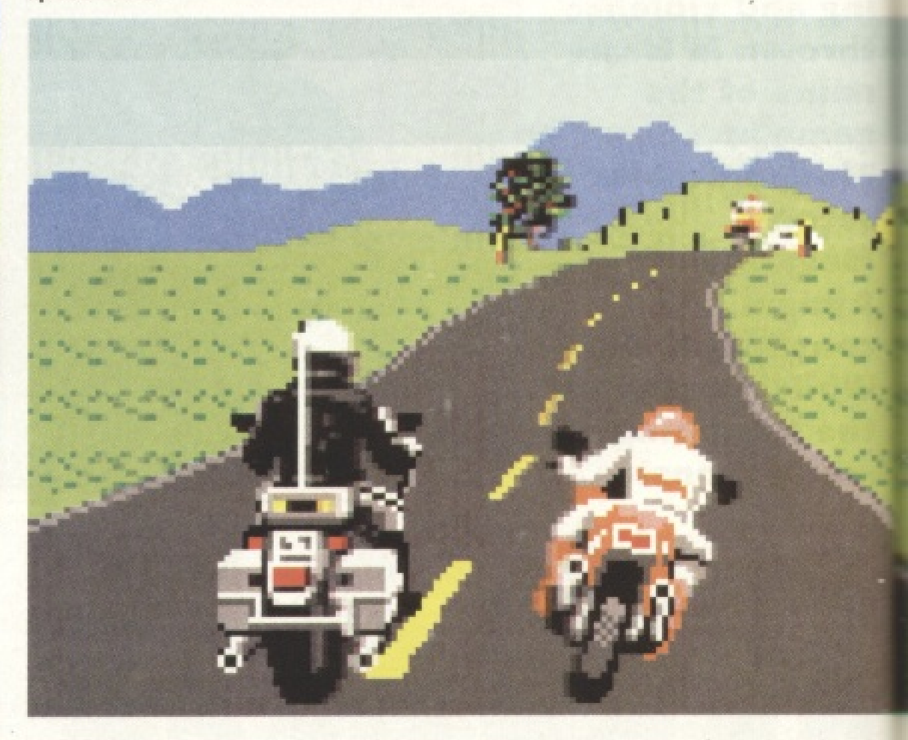


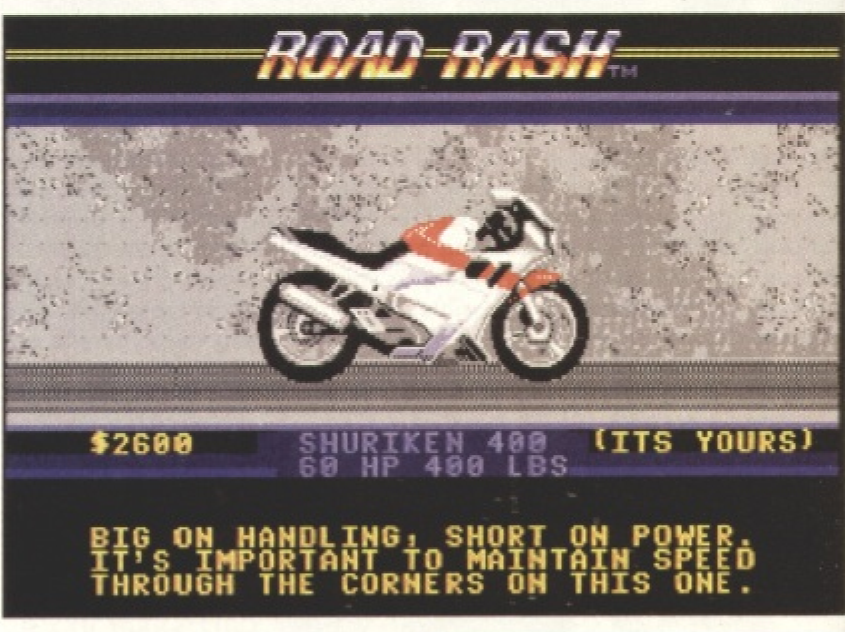
Some riders, who are obviously playing for keeps, have armed themselves with truncheons which they'll readily introduce to anyone trying to get past them - and that includes you. If you're quick, though, you can grab the cosh from the rider as he tries to hit you with it and claim it for your own. Once armed with one of these babies, you can cause some serious damage to the opposition - but make sure another Rasher doesn't grab it back.



A top four place in each race is all you need to qualify for the next level but you'll have to do better than that if you're ever going to win enough cash for a decent bike. Once you've got down to third and fourth place, the prize money is hardly enough to cover the petrol. A results screen after each race shows who came where and how much they got. Finishing below fourth, of course, doesn't earn you a penny.

(Below) The cops are by far the hardest bikers on the road - don't expect to knock one of these guys off their perch too easily. They can't force you to pull over, but if you're dismounted while the cop's on-screen it's race over as you're hauled down the cop shop. First-time offenders aren't charged, but there are increasingly-hefty fines for those who continue to flout the speed limit.

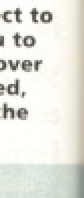




(Above) Once you've won enough money, you can pay a visit to the bike shop and splash out on a better bit of kit. They start at $5000 and go from there, with performance, speed and handling differing on each model. It's down to personal taste and riding style which model you want, but it's best to work up gradually through the list - an inexperienced rider wouldn't stand a chance on an awesome machine like the 150 horsepower Diablo 1000.



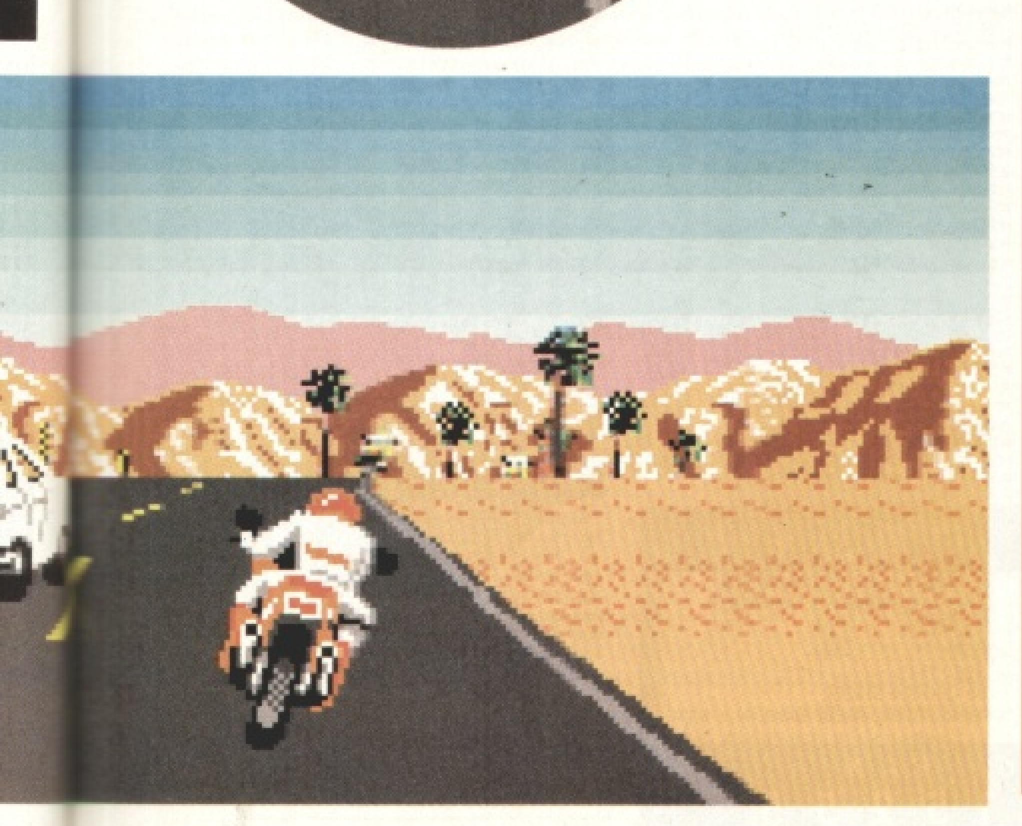
Cars represent a major menace - it's not too bad if you come up behind them because you can just steer round, but those coming the opposite direction can be too fast to avoid if you don't spot them soon enough. The trick is simply to stay in the correct lane (remember Americans drive on the right), although it's all too easy to forget this in the middle of a heated punch-up.





All other riders in the race are named, and the dashboard displays the identity of the biker closest to you for at-a-glance reference. In addition, the rear-view mirrors give a useful warning of any Rashers who might be creeping up on you. It's also quite good for watching dismounted riders tumble away down the road behind you.

If hit by a car, roadside obstacle or dismounted by another rider, the player and his bike are separated. You've then got to run back to wherever the bike has come to rest (the severity of the collision determines how far away you and the machine land) and pick it up before you can continue. It's very bad news, not only for your position in the race but also for your bike which, if damaged too badly, will require costly repairs.



THE VERDICT

To some extent, the jury's still out on this one - the office opinions on Road Rash are a real mixed bag. After much playing and haggling, and then some more playing and a bit more haggling, we came to the decision that Road Rash is a good game, but not a great one. The biggest thing in its favour is simply that it achieves its most important goal - it's a lot of fun to play. It feels good, the controls are responsive, there's a good sensation of speed and there's plenty of action and excitement all round. However, it's saddening to see that the Amiga converters haven't really bothered to do THAT much with the material they've been given, and the result is a game that might be fine on the Megadrive but looks and eventually feels a little primitive for the Amiga. There's a lot to be said for the fact that Activision's Super Hang-On, which is getting on for four years old, is faster and more polished than this. Graphically a lot could have been done, but unfortunately there's nothing that really stands out and impresses, and the same goes for the music, which sounds more suited to an ST than an Amiga. Gameplay-wise, you could probably guess at Road Rash's console origins if you didn't already know - it's about as deep as the toddlers' pool at the swimming baths, and ultimately its entertainment is limited, if only because there's not a great deal of variety between the different tracks and opponents. The police are a nice touch, but prospective buyers shouldn't expect too much of the game's violent bits - they're good fun and a worthwhile addition but not as integral to the action as you might be led to believe - think of them as an entertaining side salad to the main meal. What Road Rash REALLY needed was a split-screen or link-up option so that two players could kick the Hell out of each other - that might have made all the difference. As it stands, Road Rash is a worthwhile racer that's definitely worth a look if you're more into bikes than cars, but there are plenty of other speedsters out there

Publisher: Electronic Arts
Developer: Peastar

£25.99 Mid Nov

Keyboard/Joystick/Joypad

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS 74%

SOUND 80%

PLAYABILITY 74%

LASTABILITY 70%

OVERALL 78%



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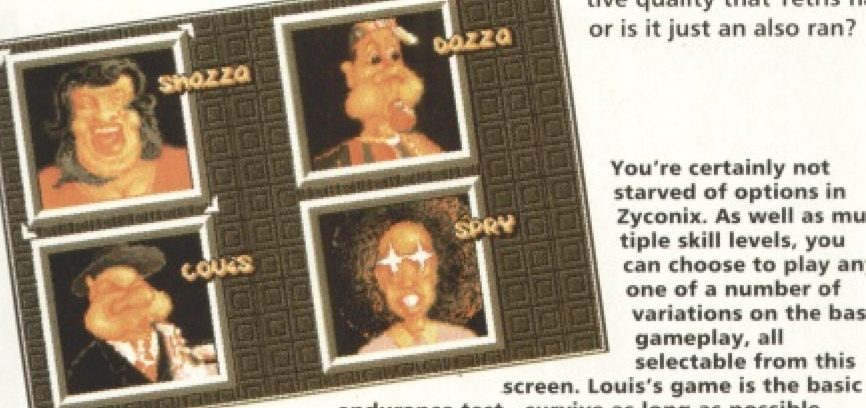
ZYCONIX

Klax meets Arkanoid meets Tetris, that's the best way to describe Zyconix. But is it more than the sum of its parts or less? David Upchurch reports...

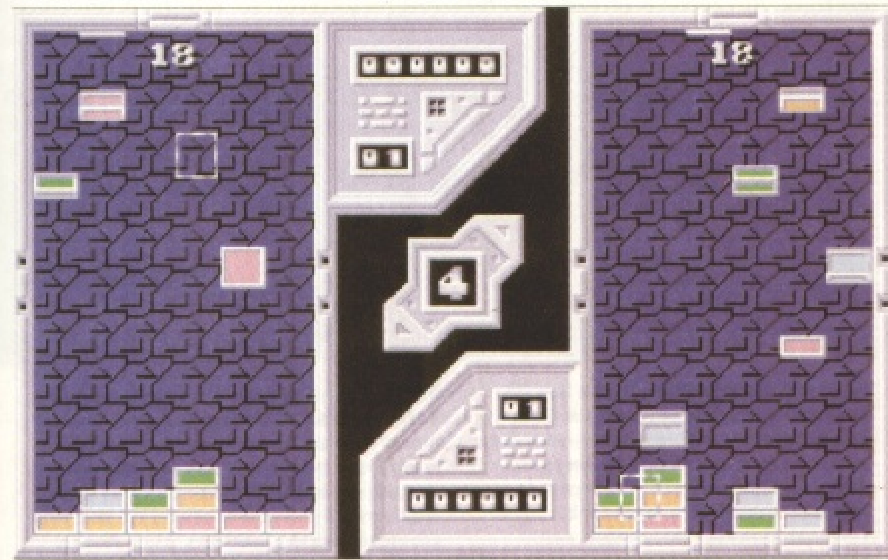
Zyconix looks - and plays - very much like a two-dimensional version of Klax. And, considering that Klax's three-dimensional aspect was completely false and superfluous anyway, you'll appreciate that the two games are very similar indeed. The scenario is this: randomly-selected coloured blocks tumble down from the top of the screen and collect at the bottom. The player can grab them with a cursor as they fall and move them around the screen, with the aim of positioning them so that when the blocks finally come to rest they form lines either horizontally or diagonally - vertical stacks would be too easy - which then disappear. If the blocks build up to the top of the screen then the game ends.

From time to time special icons drift down which, when grabbed, have typically beneficial but occasionally detrimental effects on the player's game. The longer the player survives, the harder it get, with the blocks falling ever faster. Before the game starts the player can make things tougher for himself by increasing the rate at which blocks fall and altering the minimum number of blocks needed in a line before it'll disappear.

And that's all there is to say, really. Like most arcade puzzle games Zyconix is a very simple concept. But does it have that elusive addictive quality that Tetris had or is it just an also ran?



You're certainly not starved of options in Zyconix. As well as multiple skill levels, you can choose to play any one of a number of variations on the basic gameplay, all selectable from this screen. Louis's game is the basic endurance test - survive as long as possible. Dazza's game plays as normal, but with a wall of blocks already in place at the bottom of the screen which have to be removed. Shazza's game is against the clock - fail to get a line within a time limit and a row of undestroyable blocks appears at the bottom of the screen, pushing the rest upwards. Spry is a survival game, with rows of undestroyable blocks constantly being added to the bottom of the screen, gradually reducing the play area.



Zyconix can be played simultaneously by two players, if you wish. Each player has their own 'pit', one on either side of the screen. Although a nice idea, there's very little real point to it as neither player can affect the other's game. At the end of the day you might as well just takes turns.

THE VERDICT

Zyconix is nice - but it's not going to set the world on fire. It's well presented, with colourful but not distracting graphics and some superb tunes (although these do get a little wearing after a while so be thankful for the option to turn them off). On its lower skill levels, where you can get quite a pleasant and absorbing little line-creating rhythm going, it proves more relaxing than taxing to play. It's a lot more forgiving than its close-cousin Klax ever was, mainly thanks to the frequent power-ups that seem to appear just when you need them to help you out the tight spots. Peculiarly, however, Zyconix's virtues are also its sins. Its 'easier' nature means that it rarely generates any real sense of excitement and the power-ups introduce too much randomness into a game where surely success should rely more on skill than chance. It might have been nice to have an option to turn the power-ups off. The end result of all this is that the satisfaction you get from creating a line is minimal, certainly when compared to a game like Tetris, mainly because you often don't feel all as much in control of what's going on as you should do. This criticism makes it sound like I didn't enjoy the game which really isn't true - I found it a lot of fun to play. The only problem is that, despite the four game variations and the multiple skill levels, I can't see it dragging me back for one more go in a year's time like a classic arcade puzzler should.

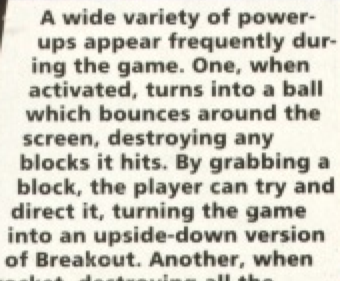
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GRAPHICS	62%
SOUND	82%
PLAYABILITY	80%
LASTABILITY	73%
OVERALL	77%



A wide variety of power-ups appear frequently during the game. One, when activated, turns into a ball which bounces around the screen, destroying any blocks it hits. By grabbing a block, the player can try and direct it, turning the game into an upside-down version of Breakout. Another, when grabbed and released, drops down like a rocket, destroying all the blocks in the column it hits. Although useful in times of trouble, these power-ups can also have the dismaying effect of trashing any carefully planned line set-ups you may have created.



ROME A.D.92

How we long for those days when the baths were as hot as the orgies and stealing and knifing were as commonplace as slavery. Simon Byron slips into a cosy toga and pops down to Rome for a dip in steaming ass's milk with the not-very-ugly Cleopatra

I never knew computer games could be so educational! And today's lesson, courtesy of Millennium, is all about Rome. Rome began life as a tiny city-state always under threat from neighbouring kingdoms. The extent of the threat was so great that the Romans decided to kill everybody and set themselves up as a Republic.

This newly-formed region was divided into two classes; the Patricians, the elite of the population who held the vote, and the Plebians, who had no money and made no decisions at all in the running of the community. After a century or so of this, the Plebs decided that they'd had enough and marched off out of Rome, threatening to start their own city (Plebsville, or Bath as we call it today). The Patricians, horrified at the thought of actually having to do some hard labour, begged the Plebs to stay - even offering them the privilege of the vote!

During the next few centuries Rome expanded relentlessly, conquering all neighbouring states and acquiring a vast amount of new citizens who, once submitting to the Roman rule, were allowed to vote as well. Unfortunately all this vote counting business was becoming a bit of a chore for the rulers so they dropped democracy for straight dictatorship and the reign of the Emperors began. With their advances in technology and revolutionary plumbing system the Roman era looked likely to run and run.

But soon the population became extremely complacent and when the first cracks began to appear in their 'perfect' society none of them lifted a finger to stop it. Rome soon found itself at the mercy of bloodthirsty adventurers. Anyone, with a bit of cunning, scheming and conniving, could eventually find themselves wearing the ultimate prize - the Imperial Crown.

You don't know anybody who fits that description, do you...?



The volcano soon explodes so hopefully by this time you'll be safely on your way to Rome and the next stage of the game. These unusual graphical effects reflect the action quite nicely and are some of the few obvious improvements over Robin Hood, although I can't help feeling that the way the static play-area backdrops are presented gives the impression of playing in a shoe-box.



The conversations in Rome are limited to say the least. People will often pop by with a cheery word or two, or Hector will often suggest clues or pipe up with sarcastic remarks but that's about all. Announcements are often, erm, announced in these speech bubbles, relieving you of the need to be in the right place at the right time to know what's going on.



The command panel is simple and easy to use. Everything is pretty much self-explanatory, so much so that I could type anything I wanted to here - although I'm not going to. The 'Use' and 'Do' buttons bring up sub-menus of actions and objects which vary depending on your particular circumstances. The 'Who?' command gives you info on the person selected and 'Map' calls up, not a pound of sausages as the name might imply, but a map. Follow and Run also perform exactly what you'd expect them to so you shouldn't find too much trouble with this particular aspect of the game.



The game begins with Hector, our hero, standing in the high social class known as 'the slave'. Unfortunately Herculaneum (the area where you start off) is about to, quite literally, explode due to a rumbling volvano in the neighbourhood so a hasty exit is what's called for here. In Rome, as in Robin Hood, the player is not given 'direct' control over Hector, and if left alone for a few seconds he'll quite happily wander off to do his own thing.



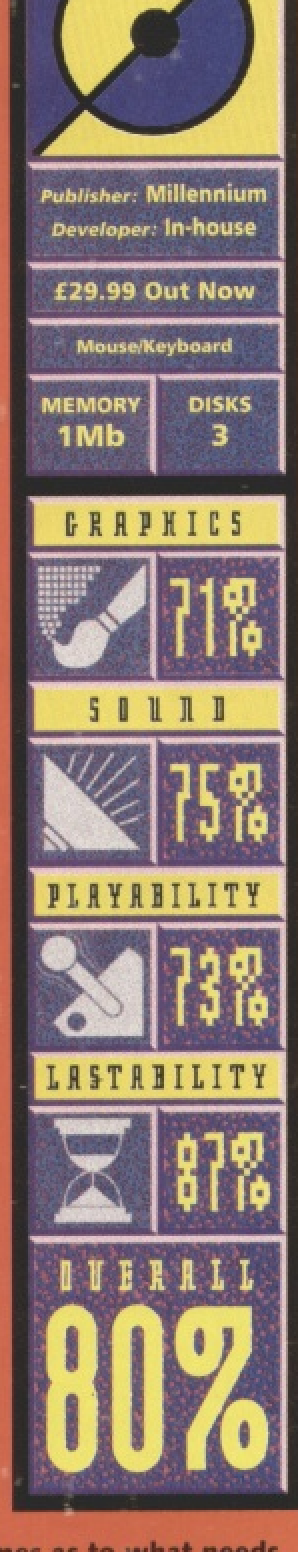


The Map displays an immediate view of the surrounding area, with all the various other characters represented by flashing dots. The surrounding buildings are also shown and it is possible just to click on the exact location you wish Hector to go to, avoiding all the needless wandering about between events.



The quest soon changes from a simple take-care-of-yourself outing to a strategy- and military-based operation. Hector needs to capture the British Standard from the opposing army by guiding his men successfully through this mission. The controls change slightly in these sections allowing commands to be easily issued to the troops. They can be made to rally, form up and follow Hector - in short anything really, as long as they keep the Roman Standard safe. Lose that and you'll not only have lost your honour, you'll have lost the game too.





THE VERDICT

If you hadn't guessed by now, Rome A.D.92 uses the same game-engine as Millennium's previous adventure, Robin Hood. The graphical style is almost the same, the controls are virtually the same, in fact even the criticisms are the same. As with Robin, the backdrops may be pretty, the humour still funny (in places) but the sprites are too small and the scrolling is atrocious. Perhaps with a little more attention to the 'front end', Rome could have become an instant classic but the sadly-lacking visual department makes for some severe eye-straining sessions which can result in huge optician bills (I'm sending the invoice for a new pair of peepers to Millennium right now). This is a shame as on playing Rome reveals itself to be a really (and I mean REALLY) huge game with plenty to do and action a-plenty. The way the plot develops is good and the overall storyline is well written and neat. It can be quite unclear at times as to what needs to be done but this is the case with most types of adventure games. Robin Hood was often criticised for being too small and too easy but I doubt if you'll hear that said about Rome as I think it would take even the most experienced Roman many weeks of play to become Emperor. Cleverly, the way that the game is split into stages, each with their own map area, means that although there's lots to see and do, the game's size never becomes frustrating or overwhelming. Overall, Rome falls into the very good but not astounding category and, as such, you certainly find me thinking twice before chatting this up at the Computer Games Bar.

PALADIN 2

THE VERDICT

Sexy strategy games are hard to find, with most being poor slap-dash affairs consisting of slow-moving and badly-drawn sprites. Just because they're supposed to appeal more to the thinkers among us doesn't necessarily mean that presentation should be the last thing considered, does it? Anyway, guess what we have here? Initially the game promises more than it delivers with a rather nice opening consisting of a groovy title screen and blissfully relaxing accompanying music. Things soon start to progress rapidly downhill though, and once into the game proper the real flaws leap out of the screen at you. Now, I don't dislike this game specifically because it's a strategy game - I enjoyed Sabre Team (reviewed this issue) immensely, and the two games actually have a lot in common, what with the alternating turns and 'movement points' system. Unfortunately, although you don't have to wait so long between goes as in Sabre Team, all Paladin consists of is slow trekking across the screen and hardly any action. When your party of travellers does come across a group of baddies the battles seem unfair and frustrating. Casting spells is a hit and miss affair and more often than not you are simply told 'the spell failed' with no explanation to stop you from making the same mistake again. Seeing as you could have wasted a large fraction of your movement points attempting the spell it seems a trifle harsh that no reason for its failure is given. Of course, come the enemy's go the evil mages chuck the spells around like there's no tomorrow. The mission builder is a necessary addition as the missions supplied are dull in the extreme and all seem to consist of milling about waiting to be attacked. I don't know - maybe if you were deeply into these sorts of games you might read more into it than I have but if you're anything like me and you happen to be in my car then you'll be steering well clear.

Sorry.

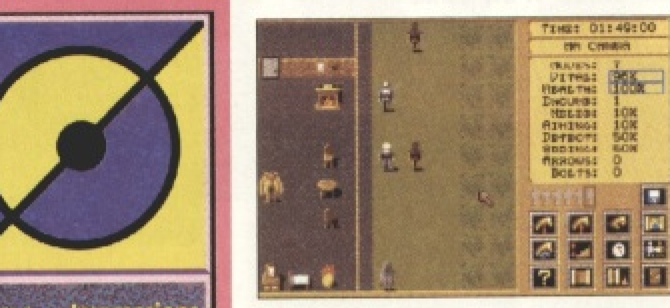
Publisher: Impressions
Developer: Omnitrend

£25.99 Out Now

Mouse

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS	61%
SOUND	70%
PLAYABILITY	52%
LASTABILITY	61%
OVERALL	53%

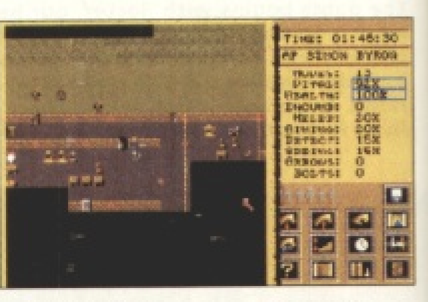


The main screen is, surprisingly, where all the main action takes place. Commands are issued via the handy icons and movement is achieved first by facing the character under control in the direction that you wish to travel and then clicking on the landscape directly, causing the sprite to move one square in that direction.

A Paladin is a legendary hero and a knight of great renown. There's no-one better to review a game featuring such a character than Simon Byron, who is to hard-men what Winona Ryder is to the Haggard Women Foundation (i.e. not a lot)

Ever wanted to get tooled up, gather a few mates together and set off into magical worlds containing all manner of weird creatures? Well, now's your chance. Playing a Paladin requires skill and cunning, as it's in their job description to solve puzzles, rescue prisoners and save villages. And whilse completing these quests is a task in itself, the overall game objective is to take your Paladin from the status of freshly-trained novice to a hardened, matchless veteran.

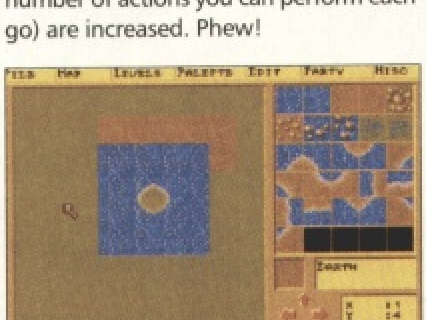
Progress is never easy in these quests so a team of assorted allies are provided (consisting of an array of Mages, Rangers, Swordsmen and Thieves) who must interact with each other using their individual abilities to overcome obstacles and opponents and thus complete the quest. The Paladin (that's you, that is) has four abilities which increase with time and experience. As these four skills improve you are given new titles to reflect your greater status and your overall performance and, more importantly, your movement points (reflecting the number of actions you can perform each go) are increased. Phew!



The map can be called at any time and displays a view of all the locations visited in the immediate vicinity. Fortunately this doesn't use up any valuable movement points so there are no real restrictions on the amount of times you can use it.

The land is populated by a vast number of death-inducing creatures who all require different offensive and defensive procedures. The weirder beasts include a 'Doppleganger' (a kind of nasty chameleon) and a 'Displacer Beast' who always appear one square away from where they really are.

So then, the characters have been introduced, the scenes have been set, let's take a look what we're here to see, namely the game itself.



The Quest Builder allows you to design any scenario you can think up. You can place special objects, buildings and opponents wherever you please as well as setting various teleport points and the overall victory conditions. Although requiring some thought to use, the results can be pretty spectacular and, if nothing else, will add to the overall longevity of the game.

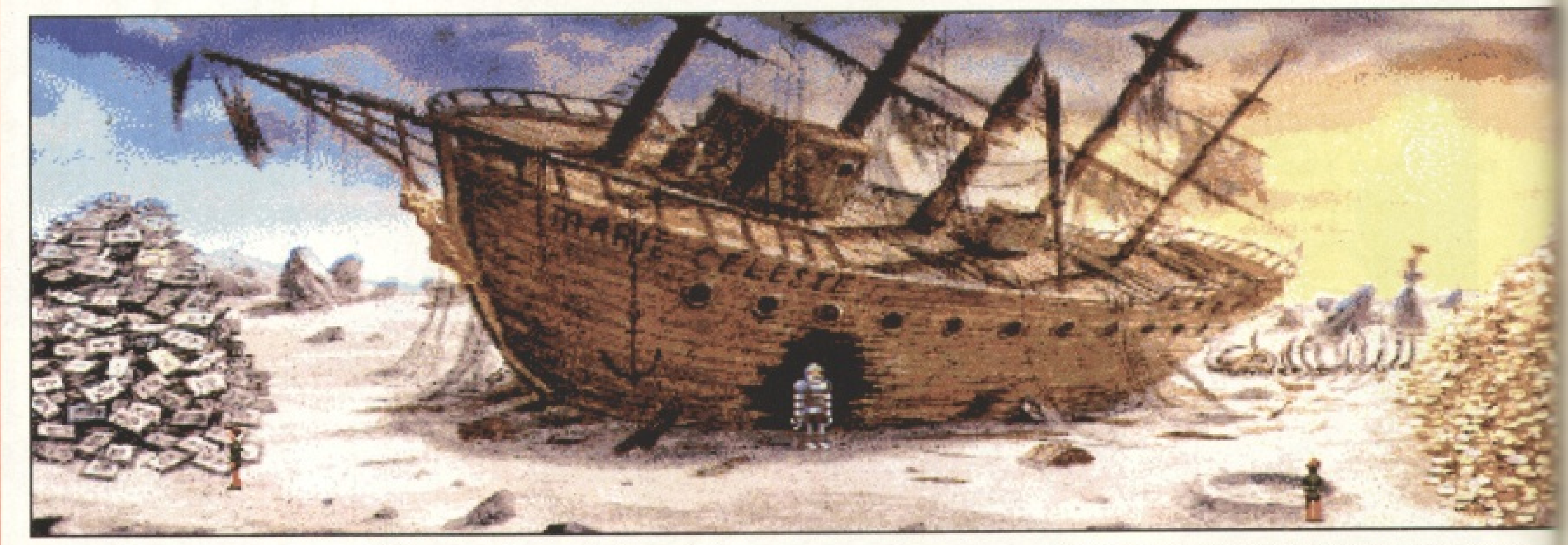


The thick of the battle causes all manner of effects to take place. The slightly off-coloured blocks in the top right-hand corner of the play area are the result of a fireball thrown by the evil creatures. The timer in the corner of the icon area indicates the time left to complete the mission and it is reduced by thirty seconds for every turn made by you or the computer.


HOLLI WOULD IF SHE COULD
...and she will
COOL WORLD
CARTOON LAND GONE BAD!
Whilst publishing his underground comic Jack Deebs has unwittingly created a parallel universe inhabited by cartoon characters known as DOODLES. You are transported into COOL WORLD and seduced, through engaging messages, by the Doodle vamp... HOLLI. Visual jokes and gags punctuate your adventure as you hop to and fro between reality and COOL WORLD. But Holli's dream is to shed her Doodle indentity... to become a real woman - with a real interest in Jack!
A DREAM THAT COULD DESTROY BOTH WORLDS!
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REVIEW

Curse of Enchantia



The core (no pun intended) of the game is its puzzles and these are often disappointing. Take this scene, for example. The robot guards the way into the ship but it won't let you past so what do you do. Easy - you get a sock from the pile on the left and fill it with old coins from the pile on the right then whack the droid over the head with the improvised cosh. Hardly taxing, is it? Some of the problems are a little more involved but not much.

Look out, Lucasfilm. Stand by, Sierra. Core's coming through with their all-singing, all-dancing, all-British graphic adventure. Will David Upchurch be enchanted by this Curse?

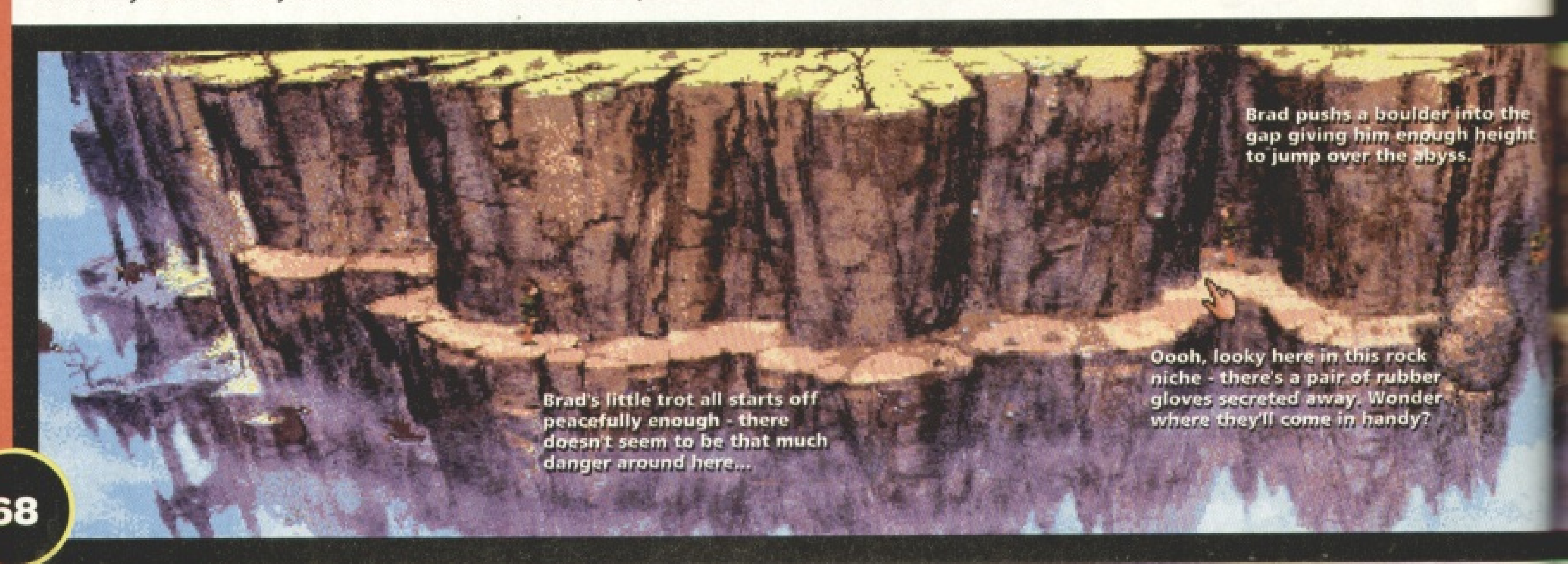
You know how it is. One moment you're happily playing baseball in the park with your sister, the next you're whisked away to another dimension.

Such is the fate that befalls poor Brad, a typical all-American sneakers-n'-baseball-cap kinda kid. While sliding into fourth base, a magic portal appears right in front of him and to his dismay Brad suddenly finds himself tumbling through time and space.

With a thump Brad lands in the magical realm of Zeloria, surrounded by hideously deformed creatures. He barely has time to come to his senses before he's dragged away and imprisoned in a dark dungeon cell. As if things weren't bad enough already, Brad soon learns that his abduction was all the plot of an evil witch who requires a human male child as a vital ingredient in an eternal youth potion - him! Can Brad escape, defeat the wicked witch *and* find a way back home? Only you (as they say) can decide...

Curse of Enchantia is a graphic adventure written firmly in the Lucasfilm/Sierra tradition. It's Core's first foray into the genre but it's obviously been taking a few pointers from the American experience - lush hand-painted backgrounds, humourously-animated characters and a friendly icon-based player interface pitch Curse into direct competiton with the games from the US masters.

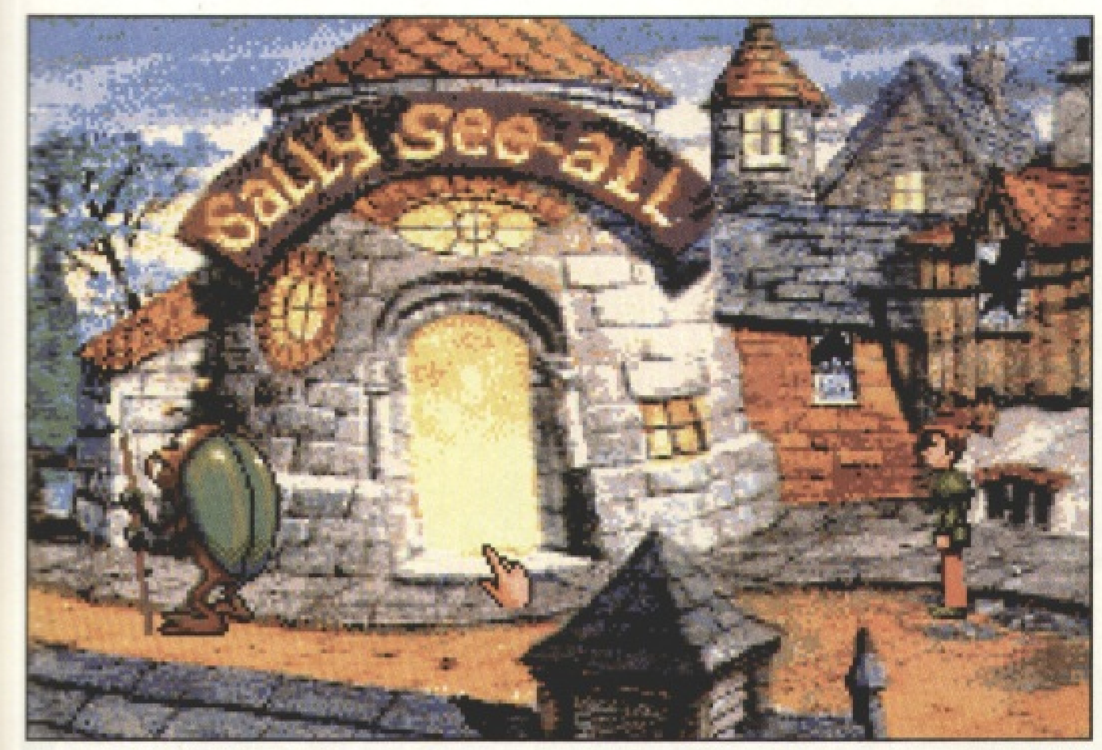
But can it topple the incredible Monkey Island 2 from the top of the graphic adventuring tree? Only one way to find out...



Brad pushs a boulder into the gap giving him enough height to jump over the abyss.

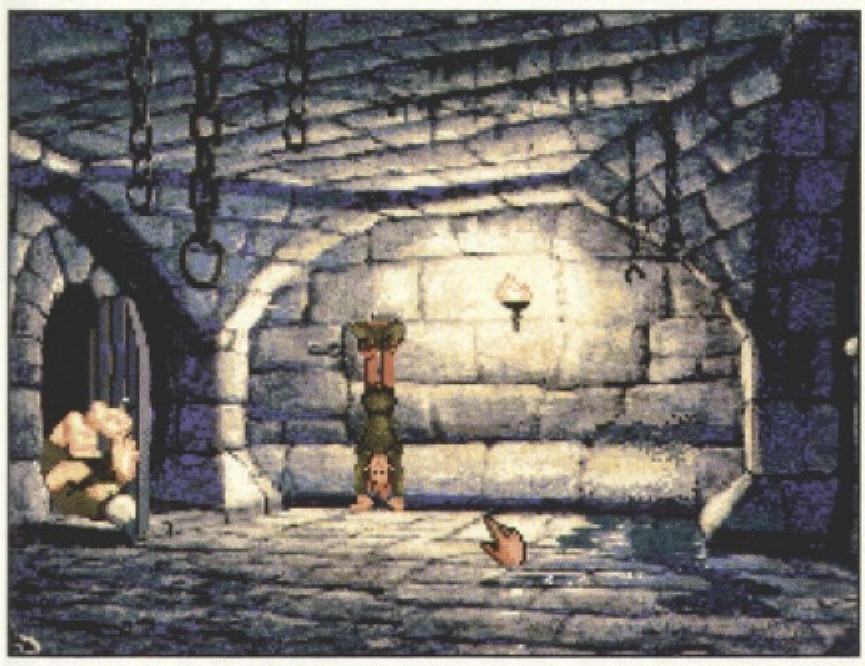
Oooh, looky here in this rock niche - there's a pair of rubber gloves secreted away. Wonder where they'll come in handy?

Brad's little trot all starts off peacefully enough - there doesn't seem to be that much danger around here...





The lack of text throughout the game means that typically any humour in the game arises from characters falling over or making faces rather than cracking funnies. There are a couple of good puns, though - this character here is a clairvoyant called Sally See-All and, as you can see, Sally is actually a seal! Brilliant!

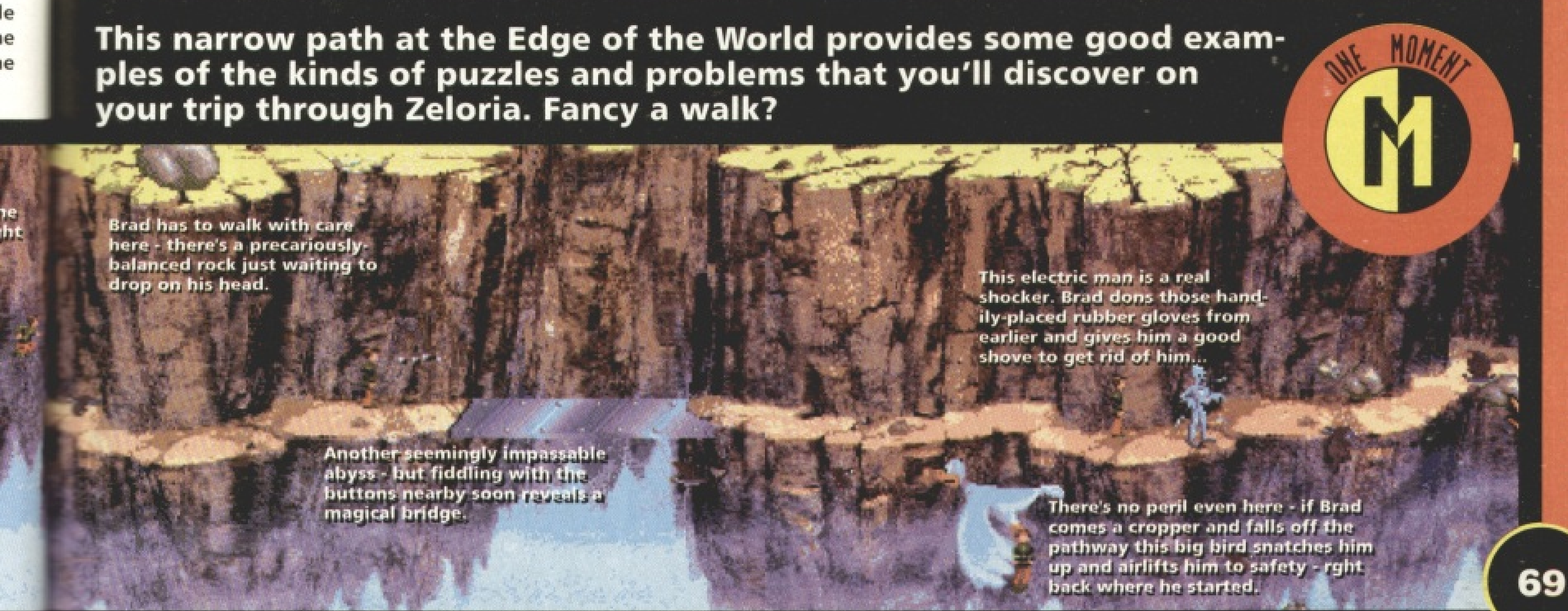


This is where your troubles start - chained up in the wicked witch's slammer. You've got nothing on you to pick the locks with and there's nothing handy within reach. Perhaps you pathetic cries of help will get you somewhere?



Curse uses a point-n'-click icon interface. The icon bar can be brought up at any time by clicking on the right mouse button and then selections are made by with the left button. Some of icons when clicked on bring up a second icon bar allowing further actions. That hand, for example, is the 'manipulate objects' icon, which brings up a second set of icons allowing you to do a range of actions from unlocking a door to eating and throwing. In all, there are a possible thirteen actions in all, many requiring interaction with objects in the scenery and/or in your inventory. It's a bit more cumbersome than Lucasfilm and Sierra's interfaces and even after a fair bit of use it can still confuse.

This narrow path at the Edge of the World provides some good examples of the kinds of puzzles and problems that you'll discover on your trip through Zeloria. Fancy a walk?

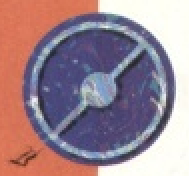


Brad has to walk with care here - there's a precariously-balanced rock just waiting to drop on his head.

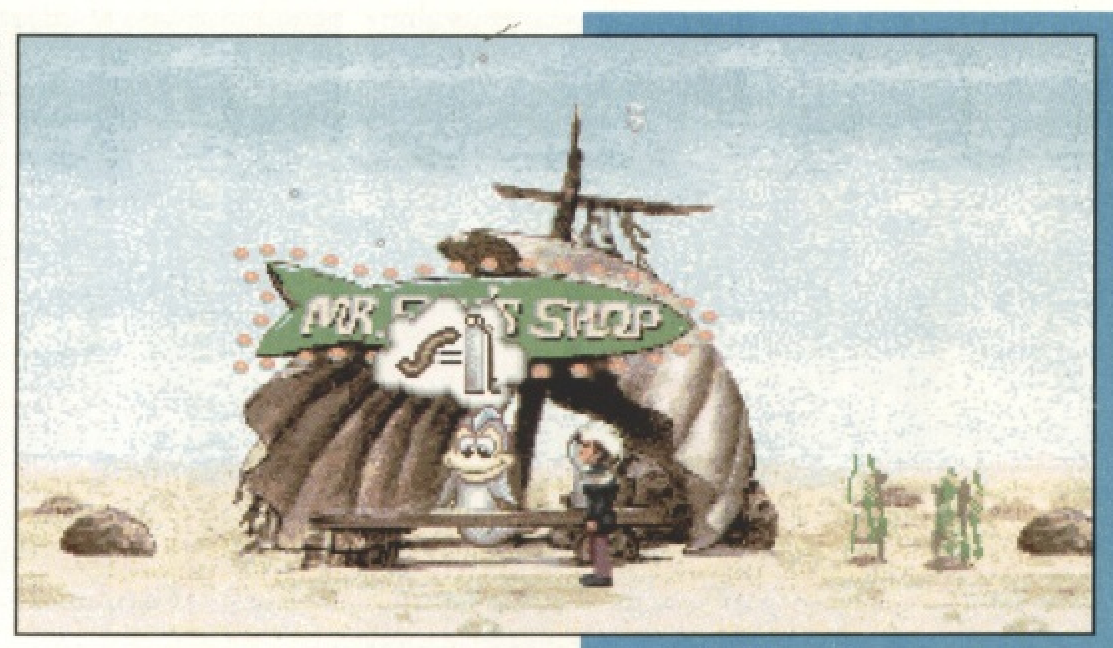
This electric man is a real shocker. Brad dons those handily-placed rubber gloves from earlier and gives him a good shove to get rid of him...

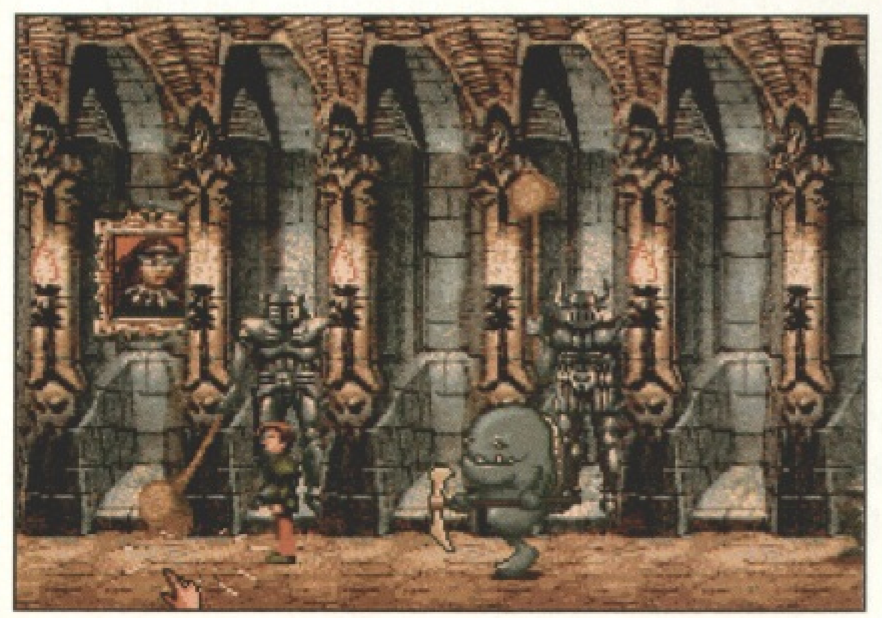
Another seemingly impassable abyss - but fiddling with the buttons nearby soon reveals a magical bridge.

There's no peril even here - if Brad comes a cropper and falls off the pathway this big bird snatches him up and airlifts him to safety - rght back where he started.



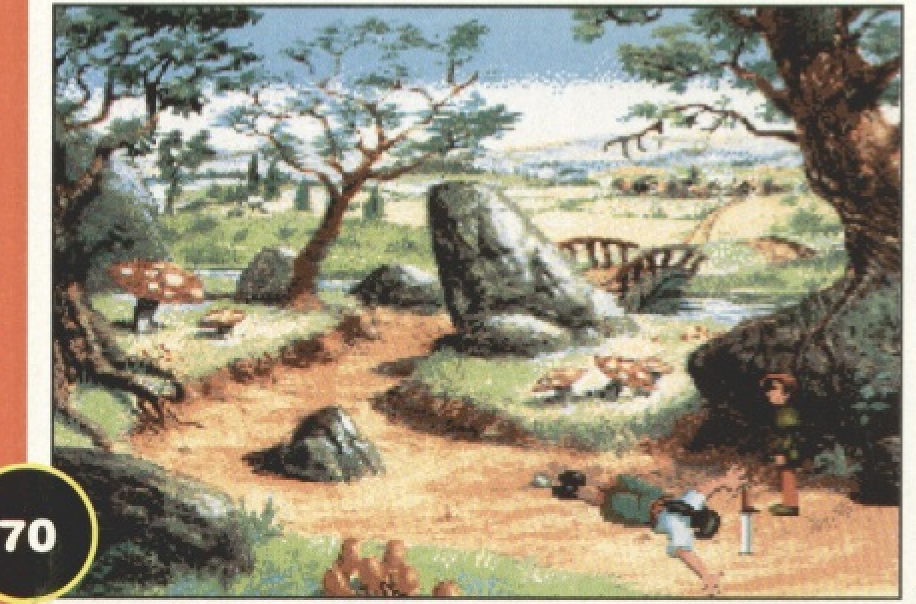
Clicking on the speech bubble icon allows you to talk to the characters you meet. It's fairly limited - all you can do is say "Hi" or "Help", and hope that the characters respond favourably to your advances. When they do speak no text appears on the screen. Instead, icons pop up telling you (and none too understandably at times) what they want you to do. Although a good way of bridging international language barriers, the lack of text strips the characters of any personality.





In amongst the puzzles there are a few weird 'arcade' sections, like this early scene where you are trying to escape from the dungeon. As the guard chases you down the corridor there's chance for the crafty player to pick up the valuable gems lying on the floor. This would be fairly easy if it weren't for the statues holding mallets which they use to try and bash you on the head. Not a bad idea, but there's no threat - if a mallet hits you you just get knocked back and if the guard catches you you just get knocked forward. Either way, you still escape safely in the end, so what's the point?

As seems to be the trend with most modern graphic adventures, Curse's scenery was first painted by hand then digitally scanned in and retouched. The resulting graphics are far more attractive and flowing than those you'd get if they'd been drawn on the computer screen (compare the backgrounds to Hook's, for example). The only drawback is they can be a bit unclear in places - finding some of the objects you need to solve the puzzles amongst the jumble of pixels can be difficult sometimes.



Publisher: Core Design
Developer: In-house

£34.99 Out Now

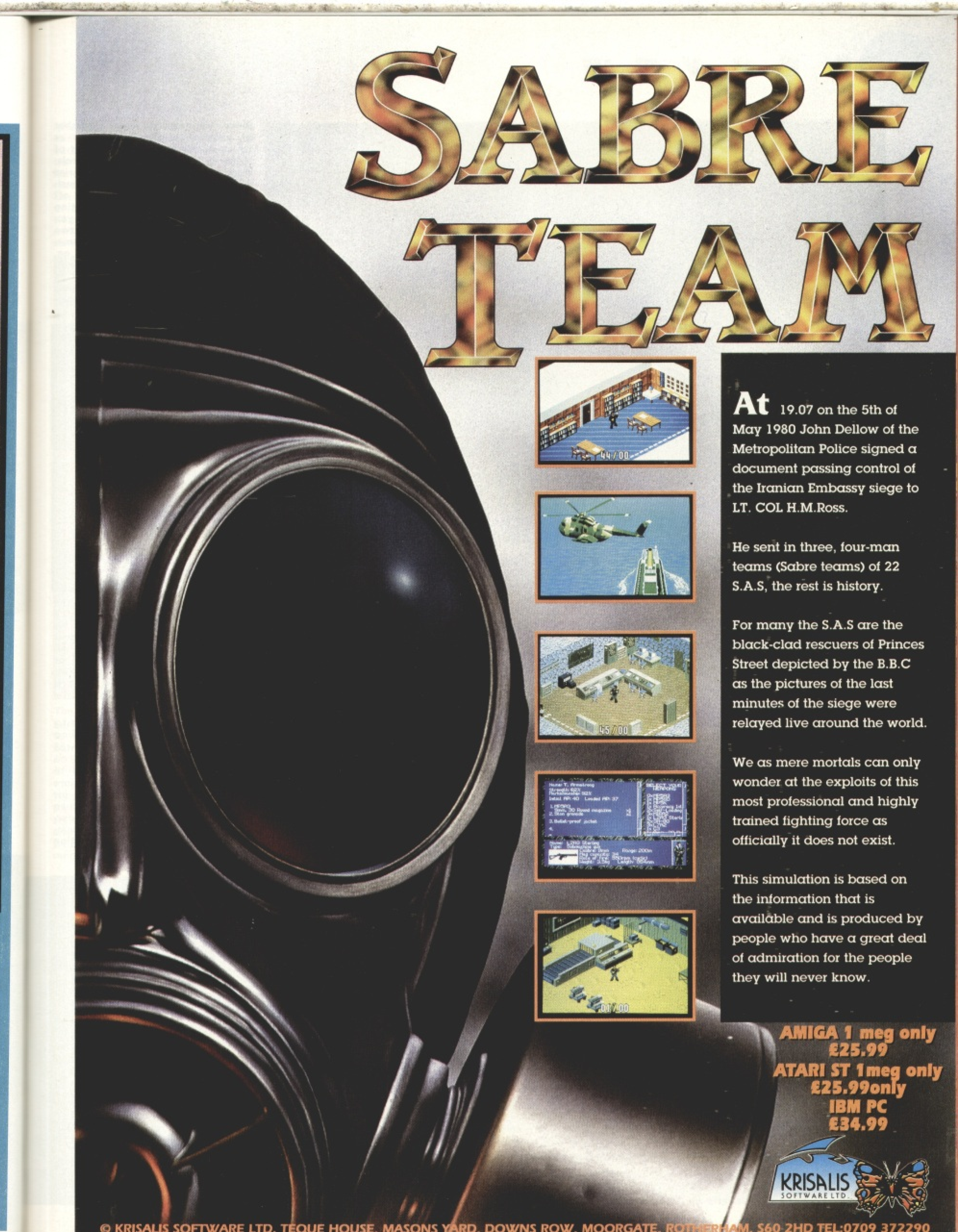
Mouse

MEMORY	DISKS
1 Mb	4

GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	79%
LASTABILITY	80%
OVERALL	79%

THE VERDICT

There's lots to enjoy in Curse of Enchantia. The graphics are attractive if a little 'scratchy' in places, the character animation is fun, the sound is fine - the brief speech samples when you greet someone or cry 'Help!' are a particularly neat touch - and the player interface, although a tad cumbersome at first, works fine. Curse of Enchantia looks good, sounds good and plays well - so why don't I like it as much as I should? There are several reasons. For a start, the 'arcade'-like sections are nothing but a pain in the butt, especially as there's no real threat of death from them. More importantly, the puzzles are too linear and their solutions too simple - if you've got a problem, nine times out of ten the answer can be found near by. These criticisms are especially true of the first section of the game - it's easy to get a good fifth of the way into it on your first go. Admittedly the game opens up from then on, but it's still a relatively easy ride. The only time you ever really get stopped in your tracks is when a solution relies on an object that you've missed because either it's too small to see clearly (some are literally a couple of pixels big) or it's hidden 'behind' the scenery (which is plain annoying and totally unfair). Also, despite some good moments, Curse lacks real humour and atmosphere. This may be partly due to the lack of text in the game - it's hard to relate to the characters you meet when all they do is spout obscure icons at you. Although entertaining, Curse of Enchantia is to Monkey Island 2 what Smash is to mashed potato - although at first you may be fooled into thinking it's the real thing, you'll soon discover that it's just a weaker substitute.


SABRE TEAM
At 19.07 on the 5th of May 1980 John Dellow of the Metropolitan Police signed a document passing control of the Iranian Embassy siege to LT. COL H.M.Ross.
He sent in three, four-man teams (Sabre teams) of 22 S.A.S, the rest is history.
For many the S.A.S are the black-clad rescuers of Princes Street depicted by the B.B.C as the pictures of the last minutes of the siege were relayed live around the world.
We as mere mortals can only wonder at the exploits of this most professional and highly trained fighting force as officially it does not exist.
This simulation is based on the information that is available and is produced by people who have a great deal of admiration for the people they will never know.
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SABRE TEAM

There's nothing Simon Byron likes more than covering his face in mud, rolling about in the undergrowth and generally being dirty. It's a shame, then, that he first has to review the latest Krisalis release before he can get back to his favourite pastime

The S.A.S. are a team of rock-hard guys who'll not bat an eyelid even when told to spend five days hunched up inside a toilet cistern with no food or water (apart from the odd mouthful of 'Mr Flush' or whatever) because some High Command loony has decided this is the best way to ensure British Security and generally make good old Blighty a safer place to live in. Hooray for them, then, and hooray for Krisalis and their fantastic new game which gives you (yes, you etc) the opportunity to command four of these super-tough blokes through five varied and progressively more difficult missions.

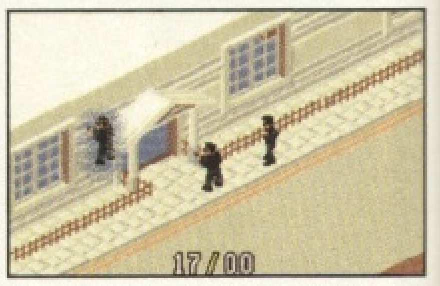
Sabre Team is played a bit like Heroquest, with each team member having a set number of 'Action Points' with which to make their moves during the player's go. Different actions 'cost' a different number of Points to be successfully completed and an awful amount of planning is required to prevent certain soldiers from being left open to enemy fire with no Action Points left with which to retaliate. These points will be replenished between goes so there's no need to cry if you're running a little low on your current turn. After all the player's moves have been made the turn is ended and the computer has its go, controlling all the enemies one by one and making individual decisions as it goes.

With its high level of strategy and not-altogether-fast gameplay, will Sabre Team grab the attention of the more thoughtful Amiga owners or end up leaving everybody feeling as if they've just had one gulp too many of Mr Flush? There's only one way to find out...



Before the game there are a number of options to play with, such as which of the four hard-men (out of eight) will be attempting the mission, which weapons and accessories will be carried and even the positions where the will team set off from. With all the enemies starting in different locations each time you play these factors mean that no two games will ever be the same. Strategy comes into play early on, with decisions affecting each individual's performance, like who'll be firing the most accurate weapons and how much kit each team member should carry.





Here we go, then! It's inside the Embassy for us and an audience with Mr Nasty Terrorist and all his friends. The exterior walls disappear when a soldier walks through an entrance and, when in control of another team-member, the view 'cuts around' his position so it is easy to see where he is situated.

All the information regarding the mission objectives and number of hostages to be saved are presented like this at the start of each level. On the first level you can afford to waste one hostage but any more and it's back to the Territorials for you. This handy information screen cannot be recalled at any time during the game so you should remember or note down all the information at the start

DEEP IN THE MALAYAN
JUNGLE A SERIES OF
HEATED POLITICAL
ARGUMENTS CULMINATES
IN THE DEATHS OF FOU
U.N. SOLDIERS. NOT
CONTENT WITH THIS TH
MALAYAN TERRORISTS
HAVE IMPRISONED FOUR
U.N. DIPLOMATS. AS TH
LEADING ANTI-TERRORI
ORGANISATION YOU MUS
INFILTRATE THE ENEMY
CAMP AND RELEASE THE
HOSTAGES. HAVING DON
THIS YOU MUST GUIDE
THEM AND YOUR TEAM O
OF THE CAMP TO A
WAITING HELICOPTER.
REMEMBER, LESS THAN
THREE HOSTAGES RESCU
WILL MEAN FAILURE.

After the initial 'tooling up' it's off to the first mission and high time we entered the camp. The red arrows on the compass in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen indicate that the current man under control can see something out of the corner of his eye in the respective directions. If the arrows turn blue it means that the soldier has heard something.



You'll often find yourself staring at this screen - it's displayed while the computer decides on the movements for all of its characters. Although this process can be speeded up, it's often interesting to see what the enemy is up to as all the icons represent movements and actions being made by the bad guys and hostages. This is also the place to check out the health of the opposition.





The blueprint can be called up at any time and provides a pocket-size map of the area which can be scrolled around at will to check out the scenery and pinpoint the locations of your other three soldiers. Unfortunately, though, all this random sight-seeing depletes the player's Action Points so this aid should not be used too often otherwise you could find yourself with insufficient points to react to the information discovered.

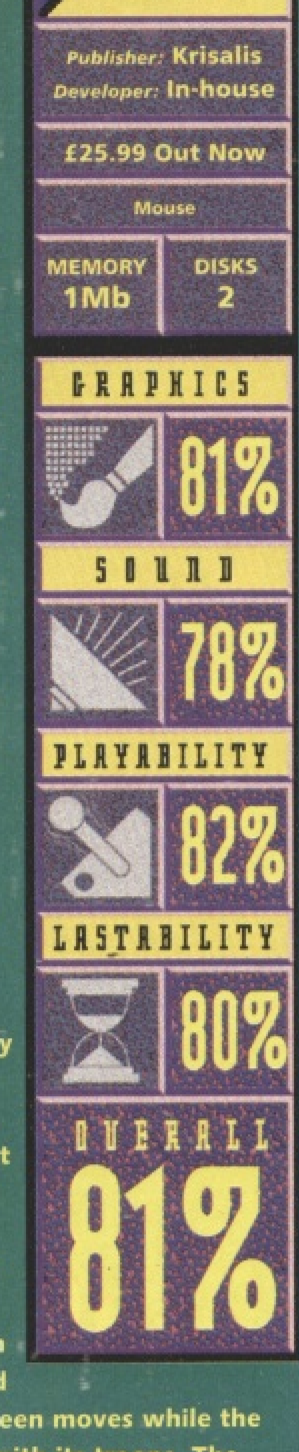
These static screens pop up once in a while at key points in the game. It seems as though I've done something right for once - now the fun can really start. You see, once a hostage is collected he becomes part of your team and needs to be negotiated safely through the terrain to the rendezvous point, meaning that your group can sometimes consist of as many as eight men.







These 'Opportunity Moves' appear throughout the game and offer an excellent chance for a spot of killing on the cheap. If, during the computer's move, a terrorist stumbles upon one of your men and your character (it get's quite complicated here) has enough Action Points spare and is judged to have a quicker reaction time compared to the bad guy's then there is a chance to stick a few bullets in him before he can do the same to you. Make sure your gun is loaded, though, otherwise you could find yourself having a long lie down in a cosy wooden container all too soon.



Publisher: Krisalis
Developer: In-house

£25.99 Out Now

Mouse

MEMORY	DISKS
1Mb	2

GRAPHICS	81%
SOUND	78%
PLAYABILITY	82%
LASTABILITY	80%
OVERALL	81%

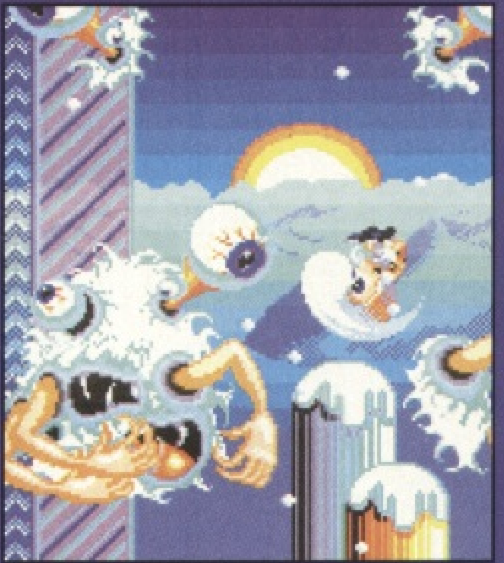
THE VERDICT

The most impressive aspect of Sabre Team is its excellent atmosphere. From the initial loading screen depicting the S.A.S. motto to the creeping around the enemy bases, not knowing what lies around each corner, the tense mood is sustained wonderfully. It's difficult to say whether the game really is authentic or not (I haven't managed to invite my S.A.S. mates round for their opinions just yet) but you can certainly relate to the real-life scenarios ripped, as they say, "from today's headlines". With its turns system and 'pieces' moving, the game often feels like a much-enhanced version of Chess. This feeling is further increased by the not-very-short waiting time between moves while the computer decides what it's going to do with its troops. The delay isn't overly long or painful (and, to be fair, it can be slightly speeded up if you hold the mouse button down) but it does slow down the game's pace, which can be frustrating when the bullets start flying in earnest. This is definitely more of a "thinking man's" game and not for the frantic fire-button pummeller; even at its peak the action is sedate to say the least. However, if you can live with the mildly irritating thumb-twiddling then what you'll discover here is a deep and involving game that grabs you from the minute you first load it. There are no quick and easy thrills on offer, but if you're willing to invest some time and effort then you'll find (as I did) that Sabre Team is one of the most engrossing action strategy games around.

DOODLE BUG

There's more console-style platform games appearing now than ever before. Simon Byron checks out Core's latest and asks "Is there room in the Amiga market for yet another Sonic/Mario imitation?"





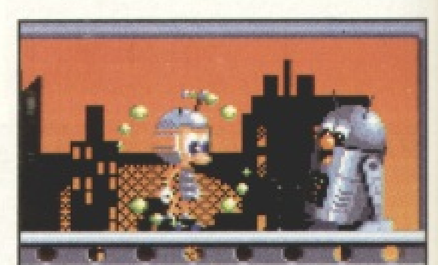
Arrrggghh! What a flippin' crazy guy. Here's an end-of-level Guardian to deal with and there's only one thing for it - Bug'll have to do his amazing impression of a well-known Sega hedgehog. I bet Bobby Davro can't do Sonic as well as Doodle Bug - but then again it's Bobby's job to provided crap Saturday night telly so he can't be expected to do everything, can he?

THE VERDICT

After the recent likes of Zool, Fire & Ice and The Addams Family, Doodle Bug really has to impress to stand out from the platform game crowd. Maybe if it had been launched a couple of months ago, Doodle Bug would have cleaned up and become an enormous success. I'm sure it'll still do well but, perhaps unfairly, it just seems to be 'yet another platform game'. The graphics are better than most - although the main character doesn't seem to have the personality of, say, Zool or Robocod - and the sound is jolly. However, the gameplay is a little slow - it's certainly not as manic as Zool, or as playable. Perhaps the main reason for this is Doodle Bug's fragile nature - you see, he can't fall too far without dying. Although, one presumes, this is meant to encourage the use of Doodle Bug's 'special powers' (that is, drawing an umbrella with a magic pencil to float you down to safety) it just seems so unnatural now after so many games have allowed you to fall miles unscathed. Doodle Bug is nicely presented, well designed and playable - let's make no bones about it, it's a good game. But there are so many others in the genre to choose from now and Doodle Bug doesn't really offer anything superior or different to what's gone before for it to make much of an impact.

Doodle Bug is not your average type of, er, doodlebug. As far as I can remember a doodle bug was, in fact, a flying bomb which the Germans used to fire in our general direction during the Second World War, mainly because they were too scared to 'come and have a go' themselves. Playing that sort of doodle bug (also known as a V2, history fans) wouldn't make for a very exciting game - I mean, what would you do apart from roughly face yourself towards London and let rip? But enough of this...

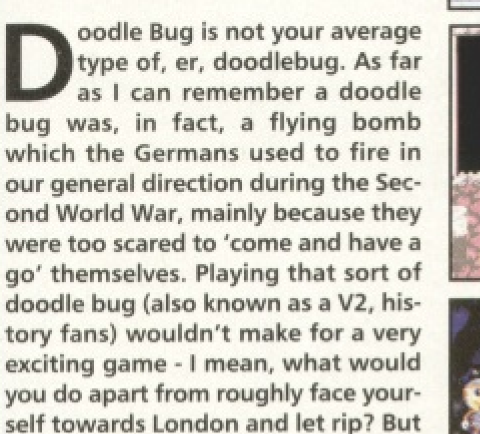
THIS Doodle Bug is in a spot of bother. You'll never guess what's happened - the stunningly beautiful Princess Lady-Bug has been kidnapped by a mysterious dark figure and only one person can save her... That's right, Les Dawson. Actually that last bit's not true - I made it up in an effort to improve the drastically unoriginal plot but you weren't fooled, were you? Yes, it's Doodle Bug who's out to save the day. Armed with a set of pencils with which he can draw some pretty tasty weapons, Doodlebug begins the long and arduous runny-jumpy trek across the scrolling world of Cartoonia in an effort to rescue the Princess and generally become the all-round hero.

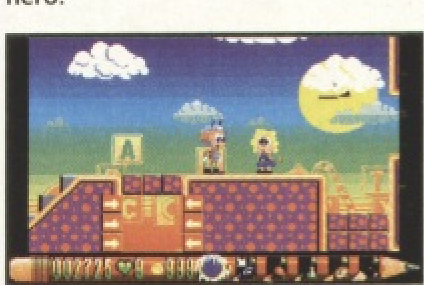


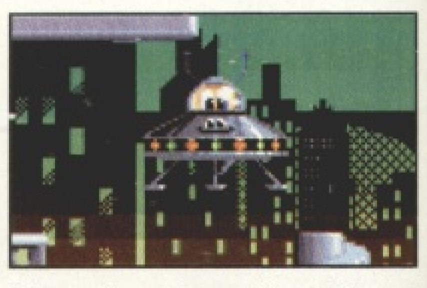




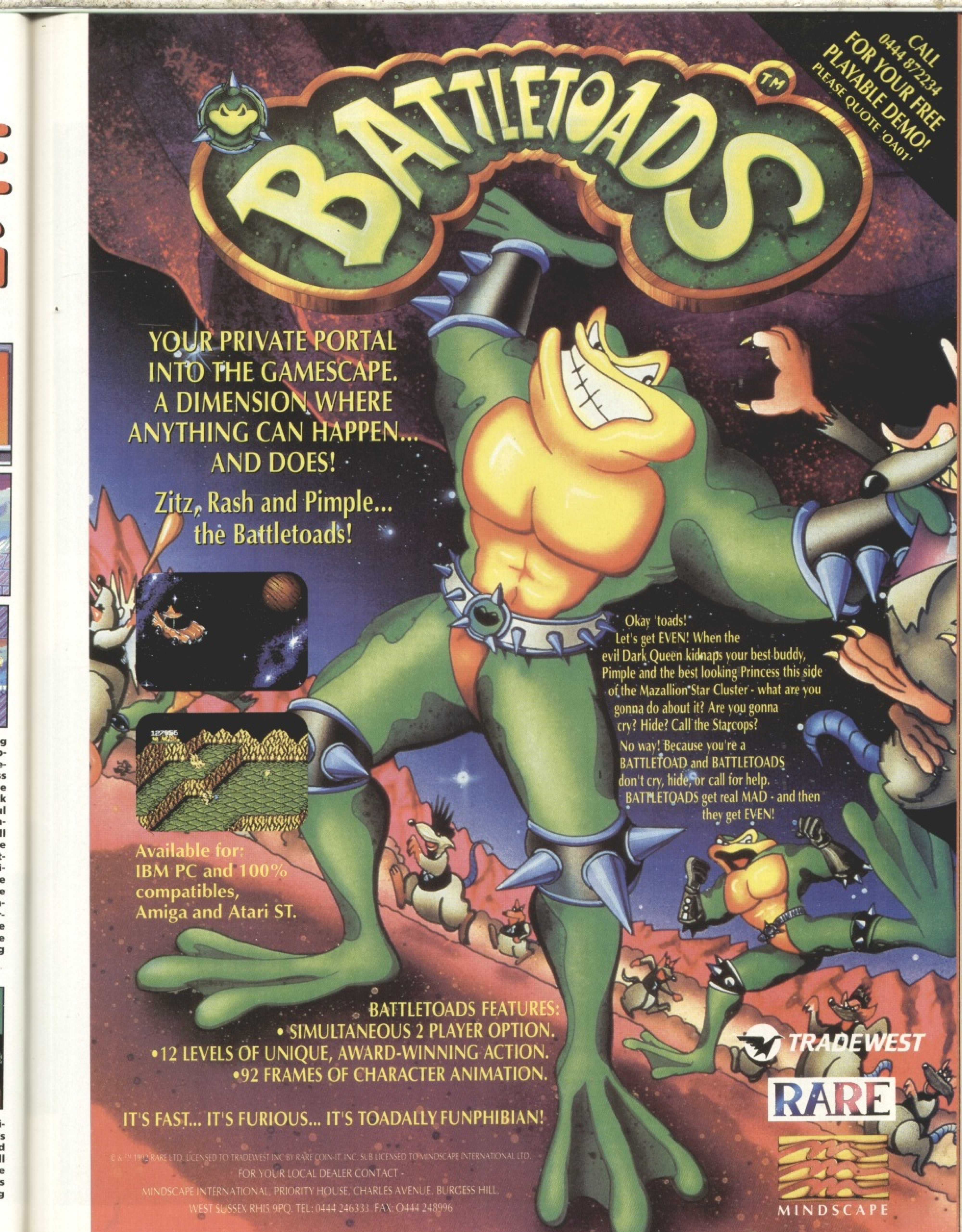
The various pencils that Doodle Bug carries are handy, if limited in supply. When thrown they draw something to help Doodle Bug progress (the exact object drawn can be selected with a simple joystick manoeuvre). Umbrellas are useful for avoiding large chunks of concrete up your nostrils when you fall too far and the Balloons enable Doodle Bug to reach higher platforms which are usually inaccessible. The Stopwatch freezes all the meanies for a few seconds and the green Potion acts as a sort of temporary shield. The final, and perhaps, scrummiest of the lot is the Eraser-Bomb which explodes three times in a starburst pattern, killing anything that the fragments hit.







As the song goes "People are strange, when you're a stranger" and it's obvious that Echo and the Bunnymen are familiar with the folk in Doodle Bug's land. Passers-by can often come up with the weirdest advice (one girlie told me to "Beware of a nasty man carrying a carphone and briefcase or he will steal your gold", whatever that may mean). Others, though, offer more than drunken proverbs and it is possible to pick up some different methods of transport like a helicopter, a submarine or even this spacetastic flying saucer - if you've collected enough gold pieces.


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THE LEGEND OF KYRANDIA

Virgin unveil the first game in its proposed 'Fables and Fiends' series. Simon Byron packs his knapsack and clean undies in readiness for a long and serious trek around the world of Kyrandia



The adventure really begins here in Brandon's home. After a fantastically beautiful opening sequence, Brandon discovers that his Grandfather has been turned to stone by the not-very-nice Malcolm. Confused and confounded, Brandon must search the room for useful objects (don't forget to check under the table) before venturing out into the big wide world. When you attempt to leave you'll discover that the house is actually alive and a brief conversation will appear on screen à la Monkey Island. Although there is no choice of alternatives or questions in these 'talky bits', important information can still be gained.

Many years ago the inhabitants of the island of Kyrandia made a pact with Nature (like you do) to care and protect the green and pleasant land. The Kyragem, a massive jewel which drew all the magic in the kingdom to its core, stood as a constant reminder of the deal and was left in the hands of the Royal Family. These mystical properties made the precious gem an object of immense power and an obvious target for anybody wishing to seize control of the island.

One such person was Malcolm, the madly evil jester to the Royal Court of Kyrandia. One dark night he murdered both the King and Queen and seized the Kyragem, leaving Kyrandia defenseless against the nutter's machinations. Fortunately, Kallak, the chief of the Mystics and father of the slain Queen, quickly rustled up a magical force-field which imprisoned Malcolm inside the castle's boundaries, thus allowing the rest of Kyrandia to forget about his evil deeds and return to normality.

At the point we join the story, the magical powers in the land have dwindled drastically and the shield keeping Malcolm boarded up in the castle is nothing short of useless. Without warning the evil jester breaks free and immediately begins seeking his twisted revenge. Kyrandia is certainly in trouble, that's for sure.

Brandon, Kallak's grandson, has been chosen to fight mad Malcolm in an effort to reclaim the Kyragem, save the land and dispose of the crazy clown. A graphic adventure in the Monkey Island style, you must take control of Brandon and guide him through the many traps, mysteries, puzzles and delights that await in The Legend Of Kyrandia.



Once outside Brandon's tree-top home, the only way is down. A huge branch acts as a sort of lift enabling Brandon to travel with ease. The animation in this particular sequence is excellent, with the branch swooping up and the young adventurer leaping on or off then adopting a sort of 'hero' stance. Many programs may have missed out these tiny touches but Kyrandia is positively blessed with them



Once in the forests, Brandon stumbles across the pool of tears. Someone high above must be really upset about something as there is a constant stream of salty body fluid. Brandon catches a tear here which should be stored in the inventory for use in a shape recognition puzzle later on. (There's a clue hidden in this caption somewhere - can you spot it?)



A broken altar elsewhere in the forest should lead to the discovery of a precious item. The objects Brandon's carrying are displayed in the ten squares at the bottom of the screen and collecting, disposing and using the objects is all but a simple click of the mouse away. All you have to do to collect an object is click on it and drag it into one of your ten inventory squares, to dispose of the item you just place it back anywhere on the screen and to use an item - a key, for example - you just drag it out of the inventory and place it over where you want to use it - say, a lock on-screen.





Although the woodland can be a touch 'samey' at times, there's no denying that it's extremely beautiful none-the-less. The graphics are nothing short of breath-taking and we must stress that these REALLY ARE AMIGA SCREENSHOTS. The mouse pointer changes shape constantly during play, easily informing the player of all the available options and exits in the particular locations - a real improvement over the old-fashioned system employed in other, inferior adventures.



Locations like this beach offer the chance to do some sun-bathing if you're feeling particularly pale. Just what the two horses on either side of the circle signify will become clearer during the adventure. Most options can be changed during the adventure from the speed of Brandon's movements to the amount of time that the text conversations stay on-screen.

Of course we do - it's not all trees, trees, trees in Kyrandia. There's quite a lot to discover and do in that wooden hut. Seeing as Brandon can only carry ten items at any one time, key locations like these can handily double as storage facilities for objects not immediately needed.



Towards the end of the adventure Brandon faces progressively more difficult situations. Hopefully by this time, he'll have learnt how to perform four different spells and have collected information on other tricks which he'll be called upon to use. What they do or where to use them is not specified but fortunately our hero can use them as often as he likes. As long as he is given a few moments rest between the spell-casting sessions Brandon will be able to experiment with them without loss.

THE VERDICT

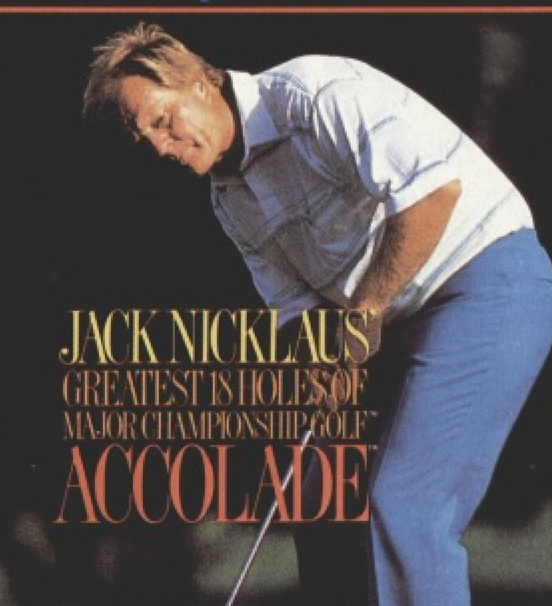
Well, all I can say is that I'm completely gob-smacked. This type of adventure has become two-a-penny nowadays and most new ones that appear just seem to be very 'samey'. Not The Legend Of Kyrandia, though - it's up there with the best of them. The graphics are nothing short of astounding and the tiny character animations are brilliant. Attention to detail and personality is the order of the day and the island of Kyrandia is one of the most well-presented and ingenious locations I've ever come across. One of the best things about Kyrandia is Malcolm, the evil jester. He's just soooo evil and nasty that he must surely rank as one of the best evil adversaries ever to have popped up in an Amiga game. Every time he appears on screen you know that there are going to be some genuinely funny lines and witty quips - you'll soon wish that somebody would make a game solely about him. The other inhabitants of Kyrandia are all individuals and come complete with such a wealth of expressions and characteristics that you'd believe they were real people. Dsk accessing is always a problem with this sort of game and Kyrandia is no exception, although I'd say that it's about the same as and certainly no worse than Monkey Island 2, so if you put up with that then you should be fine. The problems contained in the adventure are well designed and when they're solved it's a case of "Of course!" rather than "What?". Clues are provided by Brandon but at no stage does he give the game away nor do you find yourself picking up an object one screen before you need to use it. The point-n'-click interface is a joy to use and game designers should pay particular attention to this for future titles. In short Kyrandia is as excellent as Bill and Ted, as fantastic as those four super-hero types and sexier than sex itself - so much so that I think I'm going to name my children after it.

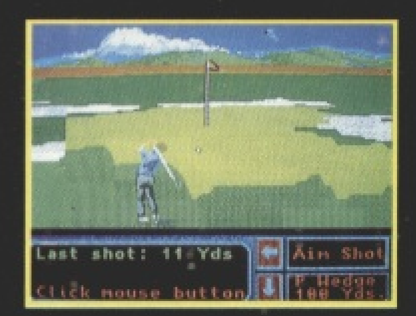


AIM ONLY FOR THE TOP



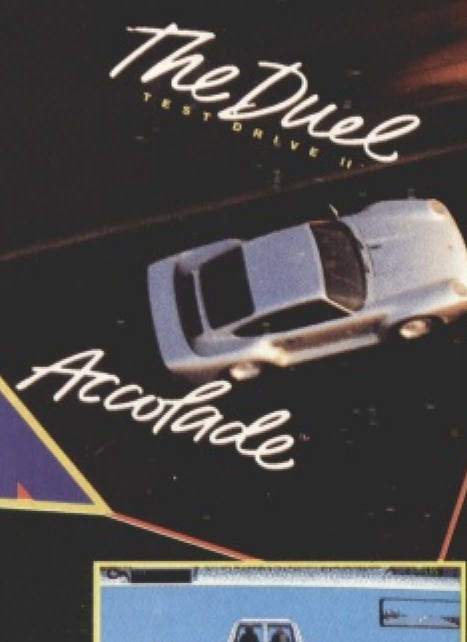
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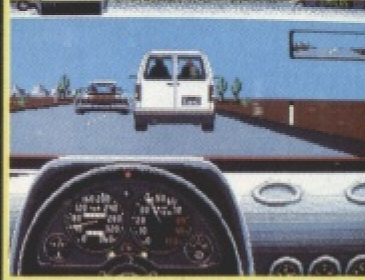
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ASSASSIN

David Upchurch slips into his slinky skin-tight blue jumpsuit to take a long hard look at Team 17's Strider-beater. And - hoorah! - he likes what he sees...



This is normally the place you'd come to find out what Assassin's plot is, right? If so then I'm afraid you're going to be a little disappointed because, to be honest, there really isn't much of one to relate. Team 17 obviously realise (as they did with Project-X) that most games players don't need - or want - a lot of verbose bumf to read before they play an arcade game. Oh no, they just want to get straight in there and start killing things. "But the plot helps build atmosphere!" I hear you cry. Well, in my opinion if a game is good it should be able to build atmosphere on it's own without the aid of some price-inflating novella.

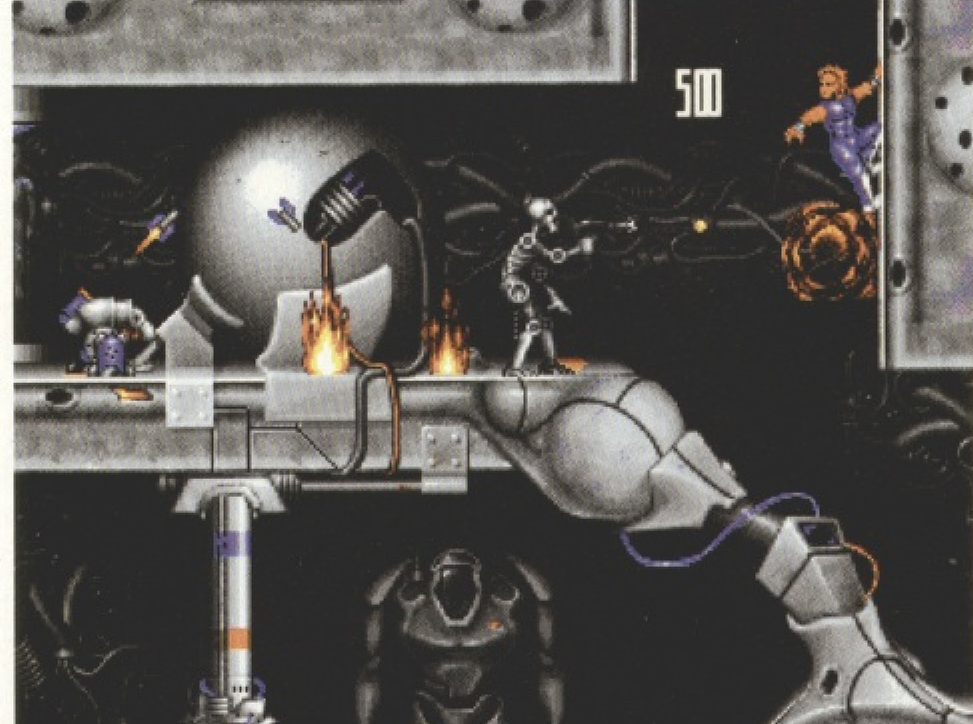
The story (what there is of it) tells of the evil villain Midan who's holed up is his high-tech underground fortress, guarded by legions of crack mercenary types. A full frontal assault would, of course, be pointless so the forces of good send in a single man to penetrate the stronghold and kill the fiend. Destroy the head, you see, and the body will die. But this is no ordinary man, oh no, this is a man who has trained his body to its physical peak, a man capable of incredible feats of agility and courage. Ladies and gentlemen, I give you... the Assassin.

But the Assassin doesn't have to rely on himself alone. He's also been armed with deadly razor-sharp boomerangs and a limited supply of super weapons to help him cut a swathe through the enemy defences... and against this lot he'll need all the help he can get. As well as the mercenaries there are genetically-engineered mutants roaming Midan's lair...

As you probably already know, Assassin - the latest release from the near-legendary Team 17 boys - is a runny-jumpy-killy affair strongly influenced by games like Strider. Will it be a disappointment after the brilliant Project-X? Will it heck...



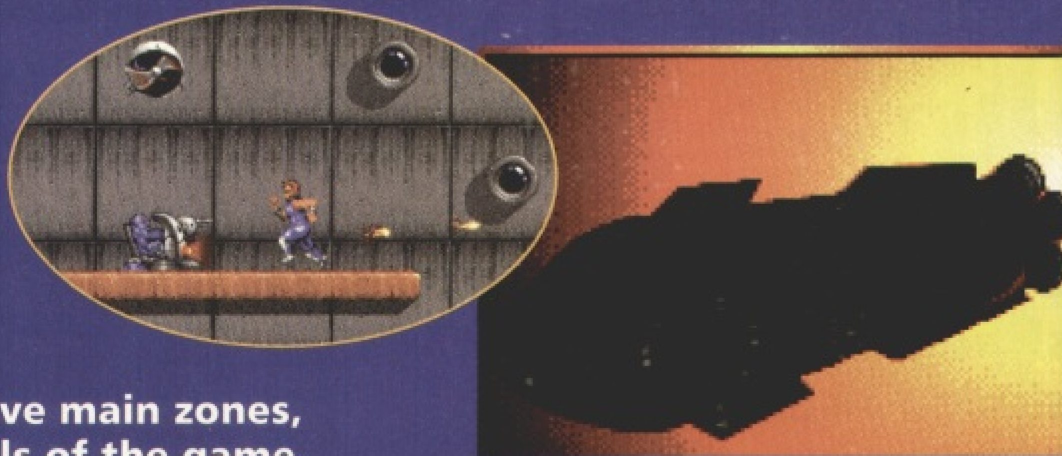
Assassin's graphics are of the usual high standard you'd expect from Team 17 and as for the rate they move at, well, fast isn't the word. If there's any complaint to be made about them at all it's that occasionally some of the backgrounds look a bit empty - but since they're whizzing by so quickly you don't really have time to ponder on the matter.



Assassin has been designed to be a challenge for any games player, no matter what their abilities. From the title screen it's possible to access an Options screen, where you can alter a number of the game variables, including the number of lives available (one, three or five) and the game's difficulty - it's possible to play in either Rookie (easy-peasy, but you can only play the first two levels), Arcade (the default average challenge, although plenty tough enough for most gamers) or Ultimate (super-tough but bigger points awarded after each level) mode.



INTO THE VALLEY OF DEATH...



Midan's fortress is split into five main zones, corresponding to the five levels of the game. There is, in fact, a small sixth level (which sees the Assassin having a one-on-one with Midan himself) but we wouldn't spoil your fun by showing you what happens there.

MISSION 3 - MISSILE COMMAND
Crawling through the missile silos will get you into Midan's central sanctum. The enemy are Midan's personal security squad and they'll stop at nothing to prevent you reaching their master. As the bonuses and power-ups are starting to get a little thinner on the ground, you should feel the difficulty creeping up quite markedly here.





MISSION1 - THE LANDING
Assassin starts his mission by being dropped off by helicopter in the forest surrounding the fortress's hidden cave entrance. The guards here have grown complacent due to lack of action and are reasonably easy to pick off. Take care not to caught by the dog handlers, though, as their mutts are very tough to shake off.

MISSION 4 - GENETIC ASYLUM
Hungry to develop the ultimate warrior, Midan has been devoting a large amount of his resources to hideous genetic experiments. The results of his tamperings live here and are as hostile to you as anything else you encounter. Pass on through as quickly as possible.



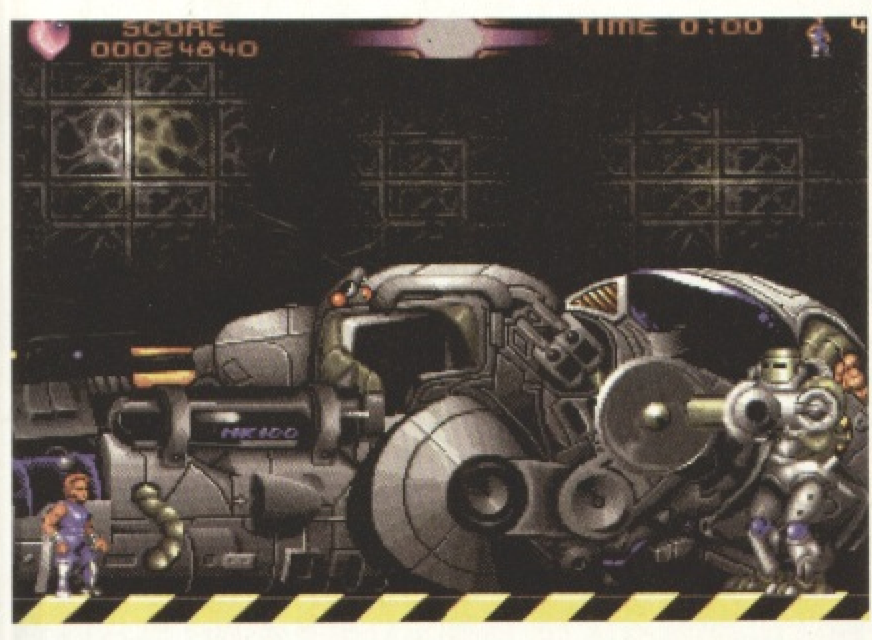






MISSION 2 - CONSTRUCTION ZONE
Assassin manages to gain entrance to Midan's domain via an access tunnel leading to a semi-completed area of the complex. Take care swinging about on the crane gantries - one slip will result in a nasty and messy death. The guards have now been alerted to your presence and there's a welder with a particularly personal grudge against you who should try to avoid.

MISSION 5 - MIDAN'S LABYRINTH
As the name suggests, this is a maze-like warren of corridors and shafts and your final challenge before you finally come face-to-face with Midan. The place is festooned with remote gun turrets and populated with bizarre Terminator-like endoskeleton robot warriors.



Assassin's end-of-level meanies are something else. It's not so much they're size - there are bigger nasties around - it's more to do with the amount of firepower they pack. As is par for the course, each has a weak spot that has to be discovered and exploited. This buzzsaw-wielding droid, for example, has a tendency towards headaches... know what I mean?



One of the first zone's tougher opponents isn't a man - it's a beast! Don't even think about bending down to stroke this pooch, because it'll take your hand off. The best thing to do is zap it before it gets close, because if you don't it'll cling on to you, draining your energy. A quick waggle of the joystick soon shakes it free, though.

SELECT NOW FOR...

There's a massive range of power-up icons to collect in Assassin. These can be found by pulping the bad guys or smashing open any likely-looking crates or pods. Most help top up your small pool of mega-weapons, but some increase the range and effectiveness of your boomerangs. Although Team 17 have designed the game so that each power-up appears where they think you'll need it, the player can shoot the icon before picking it up to make it cycle through the other options available.



LENGTH
Increases the distance that the boomerangs spang out before they start whizzing back again.



EXTRA
Increases the number of boomerangs you can have in the air at one time up to a maximum of five.



WIDTH
Makes the boomerangs fly up and down in a wider arc, allowing you to hit more targets with one shot.



SPEED
Increases the speed with which you can lob the boomerangs about.



POWER
Increases the amount of damage that each boomerang does to the enemy. Very handy when you come up against the end-of-level guardians.



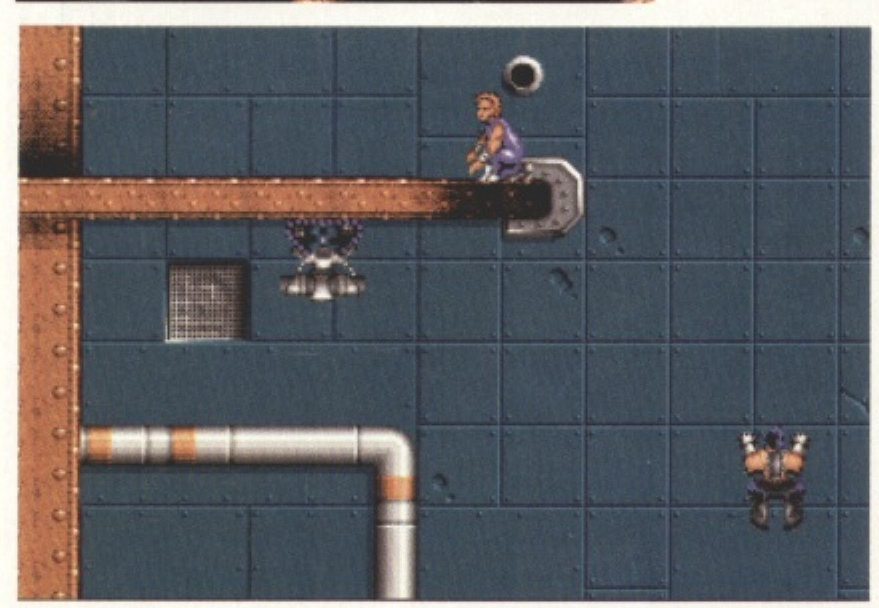




What self-respecting arcade action game these days doesn't have smart bombs? Assassin's no different - in fact, it has five of the blighters! They're accessed by holding down fire and releasing it when the required megaweapon is highlighted on the control panel below the main game screen. The effects range from the release of mini-Walker droids which rampage around the screen to an impressive-looking firestorm - whichever you choose, though, they're all devastating.



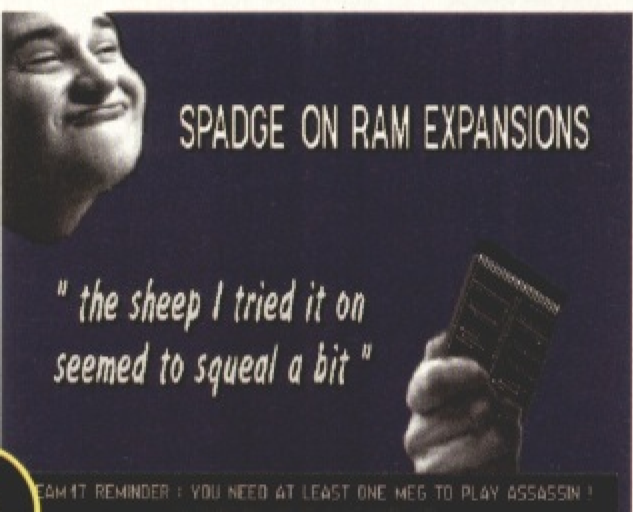
The sound effects in Assassin are amazing - the man himself grunts and pants with exertion, the dogs howl and yelp, the mutants scream and howl and so on. On top of this there's some smart speech to tell you which power-up you've just collected.



There's nothing more annoying in a platform game than being forced into making a jump into a void, in the hope that there's some sort of plaftorm waiting to break your fall. Assassin avoids neatly - by making our hero go into a crouch, the player can then pull up or down on the joystick to scroll the screen and have a look about to see what's waiting above or below. While in this mode, the player can still fire left and right to keep the enemy at bay.



The Assassin has an amazing array of moves at his disposal. He'll never simply jump onto a tree branch, for example, when he can do a fancy flip instead. Probably Assassin's most impressive quality is the way that all these moves can be effected quickly and instinctively from the joystick with the minimum of fuss.



If you're a Northerner, you may be familiar with the character of Reg. If so, you should get a laugh out of this. If you've got a 512K Amiga and you try to load Assassin, this screen appears telling you, in no uncertain terms, to go and buy a 1Mb upgrade. The attractive hunk in the corner is Team 17 boss Martyn Brown, by the way.

THE VERDICT

As a big fan of the Strider coin-op I admit I was more than a little disappointed by the 'official' US Gold conversions of a few years back, so it was with no small amount of bated breath that I awaited the release of Assassin. And the good news is the wait has been worth it - Assassin is the game that Strider should've been and much more besides. The great beauty of the game is the control the player has over the Assassin - a massive array of moves are only a simple joystick twitch away. The control is so instinctive that you'll soon be hurling the Assassin around the screen at breakneck speeds with ease, completely forgetting that you've got a joystick in your hand at all. This is all backed up by some superbly fluid animation on the Assassin, helping the player to build up a strong empathy with him - sometimes, as the Assassin grunts and pants his way through the levels, you almost feel like you're there with him. And while we're talking of grunting, special mention for the sound effects, which have to be some of the most imaginative and atmospheric I've ever heard - listen out for the groans and screams of the inmates in the genetic lab to hear what I mean! Although the action is generally fast-paced, there are sections where stealth is more important than speed, forcing the player to think ahead and plan his moves with care - a mindless slash-'em-up this is not. Mind you, that's not to say there isn't sufficient bloody carnage to keep even George Romero happy, because there is. You know, I've racked my brain to think of some serious adverse criticism to make of Assassin but, despite a mild grumble about the occasionally empty-looking backgrounds, I can't think of any. To put it simply, Assassin is yet another Team 17 masterpiece. Is there no genre that Team 17 can't come out top in? If they don't stop now everybody else in the software industry might as well give up and go home.



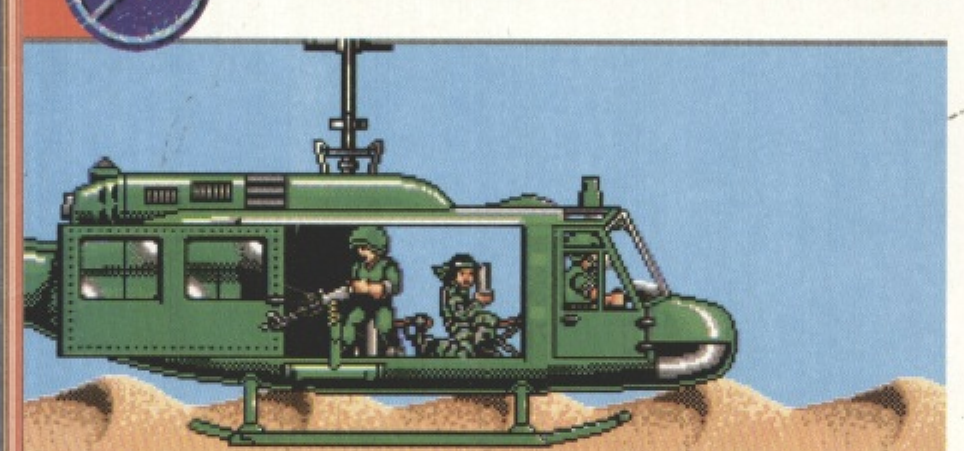
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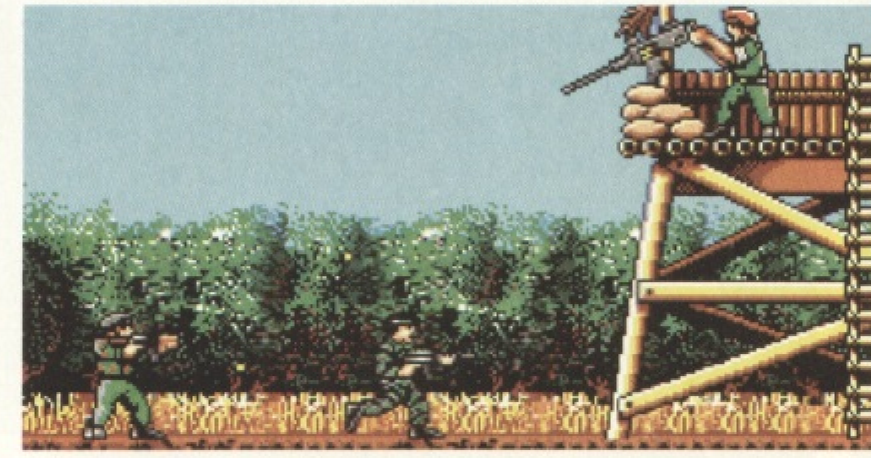
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SOUND	91%
PLAYABILITY	94%
LASTABILITY	88%
OVERALL	92%



WIN! A WEEKEND TRAINING WITH THE SAS!



PLUS! Ten copies of FIREFORCE to give away!

Well, almost. To celebrate the release of its really rather good military blaster Fireforce (a well-deserved 90% last issue), newly-formed software boys ICE (that's International Computer Entertainment to the uninitiated) have stumped up a prize so HARD that even reading about it here could seriously damage your health and disposition.

We could have copped out and offered you some toy plastic guns or a pair of army trousers or something. But NO! Our readers deserve nothing but the very best. Nothing but the absolute real thing. So, one lucky winner will be joining representatives of The One and ICE on a never-to-be-repeated weekend combat course including training by an ex-SAS survival instructor!

If you thought that Lewis Collins prancing around in Who Dares Wins was the closest you'd ever come to learning the secrets of the elite Special Air Service, think again. You'll be taken to a secret military location somewhere in England and transformed from a pasty, lilly-livered thumbsucker into a lean, rippling perfect killing machine! Or something like that. The training includes instruction in unarmed combat and jungle survival techniques and you get to play with paintball guns as well.

Make no mistake - this isn't a day out with the boy scouts. These SAS fellows don't muck about and you might want to think before you put your entry in the post. Skinning rabbits, eating worms and wading around with freezing cold stagnant water in your pants isn't everybody's cup of tea - but when you come out the other side, you'll be hard enough to knock out Chuck Norris with one nipple from a hundred yards away. No kidding! And if that wasn't incentive enough, each of the ten runners-up will receive an official SAS Survival Handbook and a copy of Fireforce.

This competition is so TOUGH, in fact, that entering it is the easiest part - the problems start if you're fortunate enough to win. For a chance of that, all you have to do is correctly identify the five real-life machine guns featured in Fireforce by matching their names to the individual graphics, as they appear on the game's armoury screen. If you've been brought up on a steady diet of Joel Silver movies, it shouldn't pose too much of a problem.

So get cracking, fill in the coupon below and send it to us at: WHO DARES WINS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU to arrive no later than 21st November 1992. Oh, and because of the rock-hard nature of the competition, only those aged 16 and over are eligible for the first prize. Sorry.

I'm so hard I use barbed wire for dental floss, so matching up the guns with their correct names was a breeze. The answers are...

1...

2...

3...

4...

5...

Name:...

Address:...

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5

Match the numbers with the letters:

A. US M177 Carbine (CARIS)

B. Soviet AKM Assault Rifle

C. West German H&K MP5SDA2

D. US M16 + M203 Launcher

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THIS MONTH:

Although this month's Kill Zone is a little shorter than usual, we think you'll still find it's packed with as much juicy goodness as ever - in fact, maybe more so than normal. Because you've all been crying out for it, the Snip Tips have been expanded to a bumper two pages full of tiny cheats and hacks. Then there's the continuing guide to Eye of the Beholder 2, the end of the Addams Family mansion tour and an all-in-one complete solution to Hook. There, that should shut you all up for a bit.



EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

NASTY NASTY (again)

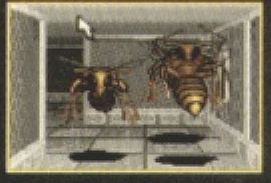
So you thought the creatures last month were tough? Well, you ain't seen nothing yet. So that you're not caught off guard here is a little catalogue of the baddies found on the next few levels:



CLERICS
These ones are not as tough as those previously encountered and don't paralyse you as often. However, they can come in large groups so Fireball spells (which have an area effect) come in handy.



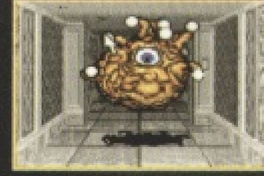
MANTIS WARRIORS
These guys move fast and fight with a special weapon that paralyses any party member struck, so have some Remove Paralysis spellls handy. Also, if rear party members have ranged weapons it might be better to just pummel them while the front rank are frozen.



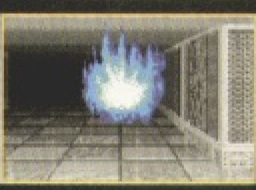
GIANT WASPS
These bugs aren't that fast but come in large swarms. Beware their sting - it can paralyse as well as poison the party. Fireballs prove the best spell against them.



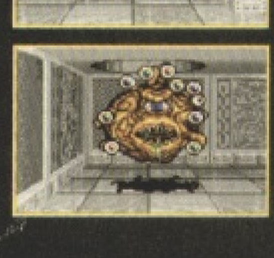
FLYING SNAKES
Vulnerable to most attacks, these reptiles also possess a poisonous bite. Best just to get in there and hack them to bits.



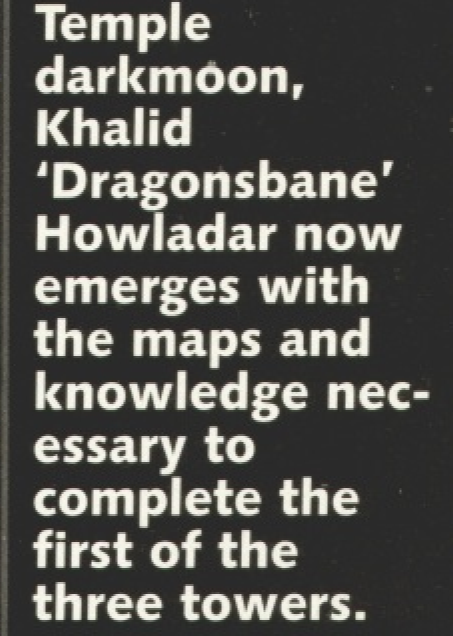
GAS SPORES
These resemble Beholders from a distance and thus initially cause a bit of panic. If attacked in melee combat they explode, injuring the party. A simple rock or arrow is enough to 'detonate' them from a distance.



WILL O' WISPS
Hitting these foes is very difficult so its best to have prepared any spells that help attacks (you should be doing this anyway) such as Prayer, Haste, etc.



BEHOLDERS
Tough isn't the word for these nasties. If caught unawares the party will surely perish. They seem totally immune to magic while dealing out Death, Fireball and Lighning Bolt spells as if there's no tomorrow. As always the secret is in the preparation - physical attacks are most effective. Always try to keep moving, attacking it from the sides and rear.

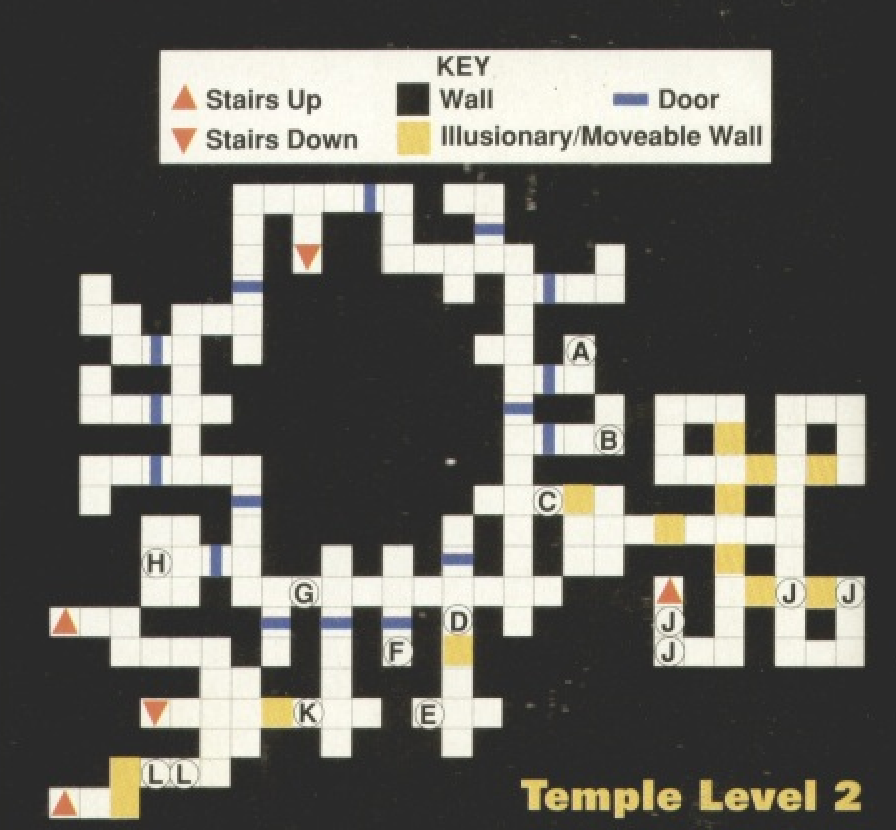


Having completed the darkest catacombs of Temple darkmoon, Khalid 'Dragonsbane' Howladar now emerges with the maps and knowledge necessary to complete the first of the three towers.

TEMPLE LEVEL 2

Priests are everywhere on this level. Although a full map is provided a lot of the locations will not be accessible at first. You must get keys and objects from the Silver and Azure Towers to gain entry to the various sealed places. Numerous Copper keys are needed and some locks don't actually have keys for them, but a thief should have no problem getting in.

(A) Searching the beds reveals a Copper key.
(B) These Darkmoon priests must be killed to progress. One drops a copper key.
(C) The mouth will let no one past unless they possess the mark of Darkmoon. This can only be received on the third floor of the Silver Tower.
(D) I knew there was something odd about the statues - behind this one is a secret switch.
(E) Stepping through the teleporter takes the party to a small self-con-



Temple Level 2






tained level. The three gems lying around can all be placed in one niche to reveal a secret passage. There are passages in all directions with different goodies in each, although I recommend the North wall. The 'seed' when planted in the centre creates a teleporter.

(F) Here lies the body of one of Khelben's scouts. Along with a letter she possesses some magic dust.

(G) The lock here needs a Crimson key. This may be found on the second level of the Azure Tower.

(H) Here is a portal that connects with the Catacombs Level 3 and the Frost Giant prison level depending on which stone artifact is used.

(I) This seal must be broken with the crystal hammer to proceed. This is found on the third level of the Silver Tower.

(J) There are numerous shifting walls here. Placing an object in a nearby niche will reveal a secret button.

(K) All the 'Talon' objects must be present to open the Crimson Tower seal. These can be found in the Azure Tower.

(L) These pressure pads must be weighed down for the wall ahead to disappear.

SILVER TOWER LEVEL 1

To enter this level you must use all of the four horns next to the fine stone carving found on Temple Level One. Infesting the level are Mantis Warriors and Wasps.

(A) These lightning pads cause serious damage. You must time your steps so that you walk onto them when they are off, although in a couple of cases damage is unavoidable. When fighting the Mantis warriors nearby try to get off the pads as soon as possible. One drops a Bone key when slain. The weapon visible is cursed and should be left alone.

(B) This switch deactivates the lightning pads.

(C) This is a cursed -2 sword and is best left alone.

(D) An object placed within the niche will change into a Wand of Lightning, needless to say it only works once.

(E) The Cleric here is a worthy addition to your party if you haven't already recruited Shorn. Soon you will find his extra Healing and Remove Paralysis spells extremely useful.

(F) Three bones placed here give a key in return.

(G) The button must be activated from a distance by throwing an object.

(H) A Mantis key is present here.

(I) These eggs all hatch once you reach here starting one Hell of a fight. If you don't feel up to it you can hack them open one by one and fight them individually. The gem can be removed from the socket. If placed back a secret passage is revealed. Present are a Copper key and a Mantis Idol.

(J) A Copper key is to be found here.

(K1-5) The switches here must be pulled in the correct order to remove the pits and proceed. Stepping on the pressure pad resets all the levers. Then switches two, three then five must be pulled. The door then opens. Pressing a secret button on the wall nearby allows you to pull switch five.

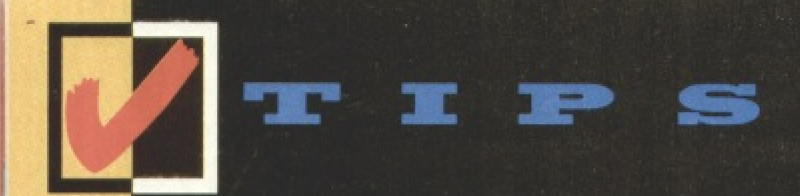
(L) This switch allows you to pull switch five.

(M) This is the correct room to choose. The teleporter takes you to the stairs to the next level.

KEY
Stairs Up
Stairs Down
Wall
Illusionary/Moveable Wall
Door

A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A A
B C D E F I J K1 K2 K3 K4 K5 L M

Silver Tower Level 1



SILVER TOWER LEVEL 2

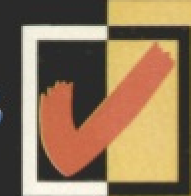
Flying Snakes and Gas Spores are encountered on this level.

(A) This door needs to be forced open.
(B) A Flying Snake drops a Darkmoon key when slain.
(C) This room is the correct choice. A Bone key is found here.
(D) This door only opens when the mouth at location 'M' is satisfied.
(E) A red gem is found here.
(F) Numerous goodies are available along with a cleric scroll of Raise Dead.
(G) The button here reveals a secret room. Within lies +2 banded armour, +3 short swort, and a cursed polearm 'Leech'.
(H) The Flying Snake drops a ring of adornment which seems to have no apparent use.
(I) A composite bow and five +1 arrows are here with a partial map of the Silver Tower Level 3.
(J) The priest here is best left alone or you will suffer the consequences. But I bet you'll all try to get the goodies.
* Note: For the next section you may wish to try and solve the riddles yourself. If so, cover your eyes.
(K) This mouth needs rooten food.
(L) This mouth needs five rocks.
(M) This mouth needs the Mantis Idol.
(N) This mouth needs a red gem.
(O) This mouth needs the cursed weapon 'Leech'
(P) This mouth needs a potion.
(Q) This mouth needs a scroll or parchment.
(R) Hacking the walls reveals a +3 two-handed sword and a mage spell of Disintegration.
(S) Without activating the hidden switch the party will find this corridor extremely long.
(T) There is a spinner here.
(U) The Snake drops a darkmoon key

KEY
Stairs Up
Stairs Down
Wall
Illusionary/Moveable Wall
Door

Silver Tower Level 2

V I U T S K P M Q R N O L J F G A E D H B C



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ell of

idden
rridor

n key

when slain.
(V) A mage spell of Disintegration lies here.

SILVER TOWER LEVEL 3

Be careful, as apart from those elusive Will O' Wisps, Beholders are present....

(A) These teleporters are random and so keep teleporting through until you have all four Darkmoon keys.
(B) This place is a mess of illusionary and movable walls. The party should already have a map.
(C) The button here will allow the party to rise to a little self-contained level. Also here is a creature in distress. The bracers are cursed. Nearby are a +3 shield and a much-sought-after +2 crystal hammer.
(D) There is a +2 short sword and +4 Dragonskin armour here!
(E) There are numerous pressure pads around which create and remove walls.
(F) An invisible teleporter is here.
(G) A spinner is here.
(H) Another invisible teleporter.
(I) Look out for the secret button.
(J) These two Beholders are seriously nasty so make sure you have saved the game before you get here.
(K) This pedestal will give the party the mark of Darkmoon they need to pass through the seal on Temple Level 2.

NEXT MONTH!
The final instalment of the solution - the last two Towers revealed!

Silver Tower Level 3



Go, Gomez, go! It's the final part of the complete Addams Family solution! Phewieee!

HERE BE DRAGONS!

From the main stairway, go through the door on the top right to enter the kitchen. Go right to find the stove. Make your way to the top-right corner to discover a false wall and a secret room packed with coins. On leaving, go left, enter the room and collect all the coins and leave. You should see a switch; hit it and return to the stove. The blocks covering the stove should now have gone. Stand on the tube and pull down to enter the furnace.

Drop down onto the moving block then jump right. Jump over the baddy and fall onto the block. Fall to the left and then right. You will then fall onto a platform below four switches; hit one and the floor will disappear. Exit right. Hit the first and third switches you come to but not the second. Exit right.

Drop down and hit the switch - the floor will disappear. Jump to the right onto the moving platform. When this gets to the top, jump right, go up and jump left. Walk onto the platform in the lava and duck under the platform. Jump right; you will see four blocks above. Make your way across them and then go back right. You'll see a moving block and a switch. Get on the block and hit the switch, then fall to the right and exit.

Go right and hit the switch. You'll reach a heart. To collect it, strike the switch to your right and walk left through the wall, remembering to hit the switch to exit. Hit the switch and continue right. You can walk through the wall and collect some hidden points. Go right, down and then left. Drop down and go right to reach the exit.

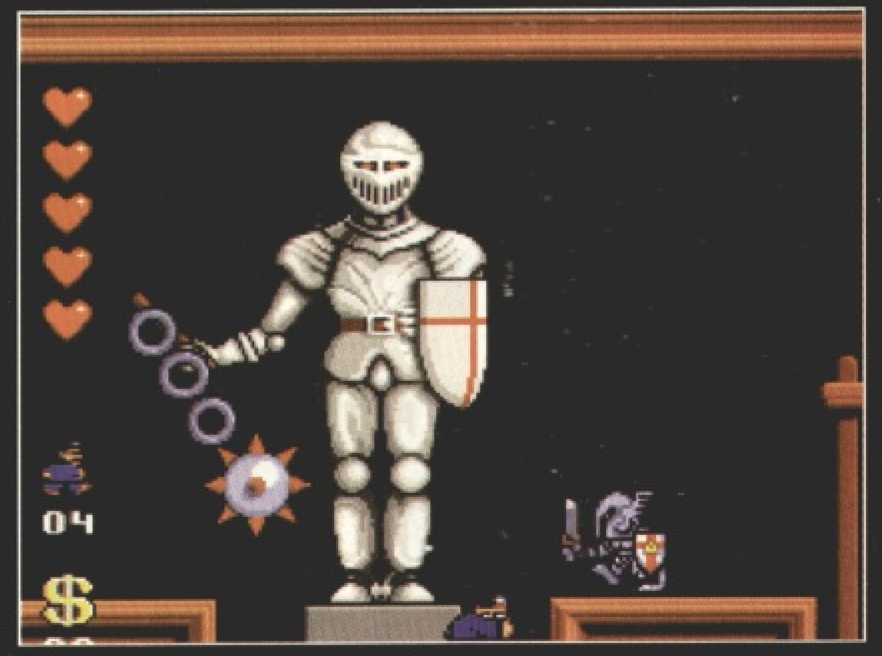
Get on the moving platform. When you get as far as you can, hit the switch. This will open up a new path to the top right. Get back on the moving platform and jump up and left. Walk left until you can jump onto the up/down platform. At the top go right and jump onto the moving platform. At the top go left and hit the switch in the left corner. Exit to the right.

Collect the Fezcopter and the Speed-Up and fly right. There are some hearts - if you want them just hit the blocks and they'll disappear. Continue right. On the next screen you'll be underneath a switch - hit it. Go back left and you'll see a new platform. Use it to go left. You'll find three white balls. Go to the top right and hit the switch, then walk back. Another new platform should've appeared. Walk across. Hit the switch to lock the baddies below the platform that appears. Walk across and hit the other switch. Fall down then walk right.

Walk right, hitting switches as you go. On leaving you'll encounter the Fire Dragon guardian. The best place to stand is to the far right, next to the wall Granny is locked behind. Jump only on the Dragon's head to kill it. Exit right and collect the three 1-Ups above the door. Back in the kitchen go left and collect the hearts.

IF A PICTURE PAINTS...

Go through the top-left door of the hallway to reach the portrait gallery. Go right until you find what looks like a door. Enter, collect the coins and exit right. Carry on right until you reach an entrance blocked by golden blocks. Hit the switch to remove the blocks.



Continue right, hit the switch you find and a large block will appear. Get on it and jump left - you'll now enter a secret room with three rows of coins and two 1-Ups. Strike the switches to remove and form platforms below you. Exit at the bottom. Return to the block you jumped from but this time jump to your right and exit.

Carry on right. Just after a swinging ball you'll face a bear spitting little teddies at you. Stand on its head and jump up; a hidden block will appear. Jump on it and hit the switch. Go right and you'll come to a gap which you cannot jump. There should be a block to the left - use it to reveal a hidden block. Return to the switch and turn it off, then go right, jump on the block which was hidden and jump right. You'll come to a hole in the floor. Drop down and collect all the pick-ups as you fall. When you return to the screen go right and exit.

Go right. Ignore the first switch and use the ghost to jump the gap. Hit the next switch and everything will vanish. Continue across the bridge of springs and exit at the bottom right. Hit the switch and fall onto the Fezcopter. Fly left and exit. Fly quickly to the top-right entrance. Enter and work your way to the top. Collect your invincibility and exit.





Exit at the bottom right.

Recollect the Fezcopter and fly right as fast as you can and exit. Continue right and hit the first switch you find. Walk across the newly-formed bridge. Proceed right and use the bear to jump and collect the 1-Up. Soon you'll find a bear that isn't spitting teddies - you can



enter its mouth to collect some 1-Ups. Exit and proceed right.

BOOKWORMS

Jump onto the door and hit the 'A' block. Read the message and jump onto the block, right onto the books and left into the crevice. Walk through to a room full of coins. Exit right. Continue right collecting the icons as you go until you exit.

The first book has 'DOOR O' written down the spine. If you stand so that your head covers the 'O' and push up a secret door will open. Enter and walk right. To enter the upper level of this room you must bounce off the worm to the right. Once you get to the top there will be a door in front of you. Enter and proceed right. When you exit you'll find yourself back on top of the books. Proceed right until you exit.

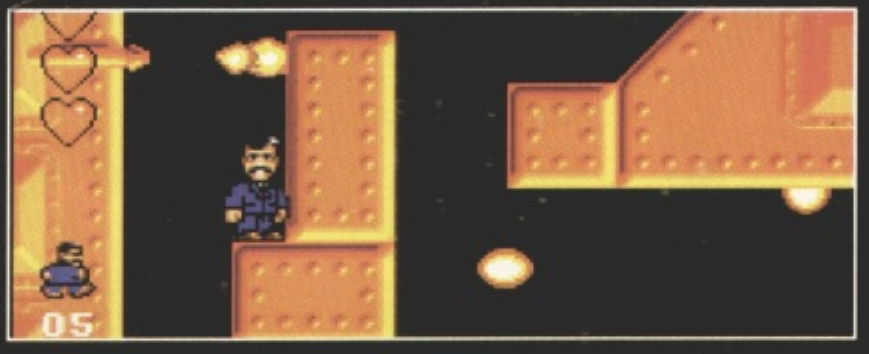
On the train level hit the 'A' and read the message. Now stand on the front of the train and it'll start to move. You must survive until the end of the ride. When you enter the door at the end you'll face the Witch. Bounce off Uncle Fester to get high enough to hit her on the head.

Go back to the stairway and enter the middle door. You should now have Fester, Pugsley, Wednesday and Granny standing in front of you and Lurch playing the Addams Family theme on the piano. When Lurch finishes the wall will disappear and you can enter the final level.

HERE COMES THE JUDGE...

Jump and climb up the chain in front of you. You'll pass through the roof and be able to stand on the platform above. This is a short cut. Now you will see a door in front of you. When you get to the top go right and down until you find an 'A' block. Across to the right there's a block in the ceiling which is a lighter colour to the rest. It's a switch - hit it and climb down the chain to the left.

Fall and grab the chain and jump onto the right platform. Don't enter the door but jump right onto the first chain and go up. Jump right onto the platform at the top and go up again. Jump left at the top and enter the doorway. Now go down the chains until you come to a platform with no chains hanging from it. Stand on the very left block, which will fall down. Jump right when it gets level with the platform



below where you were and jump onto the chain to the right.

Go down to the bottom of the chain and jump right onto the next chain along. Go up and jump left. Go up again and you'll see a switch on the left; hit it and go back down and jump right onto the next chain. Go down this until the middle of Gomez is level with the spiky platform to the right and jump over it. This takes some practice but if you do it correctly you won't hit your head on the spiky roof. Grab the chain and go to the bottom - you'll see a door and a platform to the right. Jump onto this platform and climb up the chains until you see a door to the left. Enter but remember to jump over the hole in the floor just before the doorway.

You'll see a chain hanging above and to the right of you. If you climb the chain and go through the roof you'll find a bonus section. Alternatively you can go right and enter the door. Both routes lead to the same door. Go right and fall off the bottom of screen. Go left and right as you fall, collecting the coins. At the bottom enter the left door.



Collect the icons by locating the hidden blocks to the left and right and in the middle of the room. Exit when you have finished, then enter the right door.

Proceed right collecting the icons and exit via the right door. Make your way down and exit through the room at the bottom. Go right until you can reach the upper level. When you have done this go left and enter the door. Collect the coins, exit and go right. Hit the switch and a piece of floor will vanish. Drop through the hole and continue down. You will now see a block with no floor underneath. Stand on this and it will carry you down. Jump left before it hits the bottom and climb the chain down. Enter the door, go right and exit.

Go right, enter the door and go right. Enter the door and jump on the boat and it will start to move right. Stay on it until it reaches the other side, then jump off and enter



the door. You will now find yourself outside the safe. Enter and go left until you find some icons. Pick them up and go right. Eventually you will face the Judge. Kill him by bouncing on his head when he's off his pedestal.

Hook

Good form, Ocean! Another fine film tie-in... and we've got the complete solution to it right here!



From Pirate's Square (which is where you start), toddle off down Mugger's Alley and find Dr Chop. Take the rollerblind, then ask the good Doctor how to get some clothes and how to earn some money. Subject yourself to Chop's magic fingers and let him pull out two of your gold teeth.

Go to Jolliest Roger's Place. Ask the manager about Hook, the war and how to get the hat, then leave. Walk behind Pirate's Square to where Mrs Smeedle keeps her washing. Grab the pole and the anchor and take a look at the jacket, then return to the Square.

Go to the Pier and pick up the rope, which you should then use on the anchor. Go to the Crossed Swords and take the two cups. Go to the Bait and Tackle and take the cup. Go upstairs to the balcony overlooking the Square. Now comes the tricky part - use the rope and anchor on the clock to swing across the Square, and grab the pirate's hat as you go.

Knock on Mrs Smeedle's door, then quickly swing back to the balcony again. Go downstairs and make your way as quickly as possible to Mrs Smeedle's washing line. Use the pole to get the jacket and examine it to find a coin.

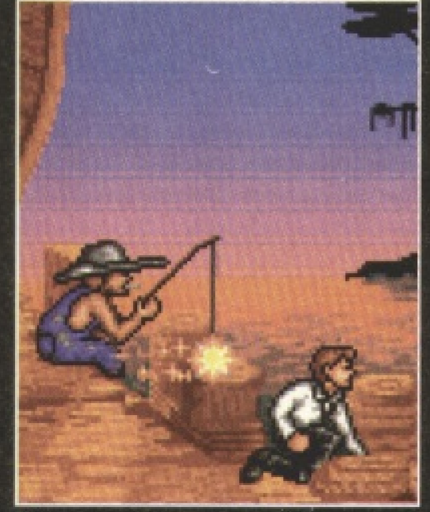
Return to Jolliest Roger's and talk to Fake Jake - ask him if needs a drink. Give the three mugs and the three coins to the bartender, then give the three foaming mugs to Jake. When Jake nods off, nick his trousers. Make your way back to Mrs Smeedle's again and use the rollerblind so that you can get some privacy while you change.



Go to Hook's ship. Look in the pots to the right to get some money. Now find the tailor back in town. Ask her for a metal detector and then give her the money in return for a magnet. Go to the beach and use the magnet on the 'X'. Make your way back around to the ship and seek out Hook. Get ready for a watery exit...

Glug! Take a look at the pulley





base and the big shell, then use the pole on the ropes. Now use the shell to haul yourself up to the look-out point. Walk right to enter the Neverforest. This is a maze - go right, right, right, up, right, up, left, left, left, left, up, right, right. After your entrapment, enter the tree.

Go to the round pond and have a chat to Tinkerbell about everything. Go to the slingshot and chat to Ace about everything. Go the workshop and take the arrow. Go to the jogging area and use the exercise equipment three times to work off the flab. Go to The Avenger and take and examine the net. Go to the Four Seasons and take the dead wood; use it with the string. Take the flower. Go to the chicken and use the conchshell. Quickly nab the eggs. Return to the workshop and give the eggs to the boy. Go to the round pond and give the flower to Tinkerbell. Take the branch from the tree.

Go to the slingshot and use the strong elastic on the broken strap. Use the branch with the string. Return to the workshop and use the bow with the panpipes. Take the pipes. Go the cliffside and use yourself (!) on the far corner of the fence. Repeat this three times, then ask Thudbutt what he thought about that. Go back to the slingshot and use it on yourself. Ask Thudbutt what his happy thoughts are. Go to the dining area and talk to Rufio. Say "Oh Rufio!". Go to the round pond and walk to the middle of the screen to get inside the Nevertree. Talk to Tinkerbell, then examine the bed, the chair and the fireplace. Talk to Tinkerbell again to regain your memories...

Having rediscovered your Peter Pan-ness, it's time to defeat Hook. When the sword fight starts, try these taunts in the following sequence:





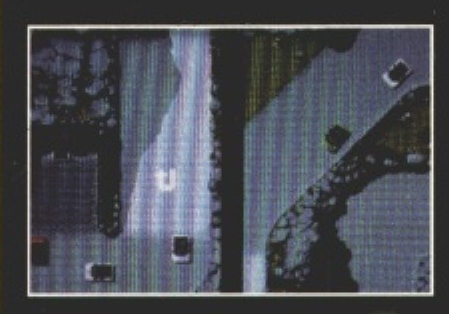


"Peter Pan the Avenger!"
"Good form James."
"Tick-tock-tick-tock, Hook's afraid of a dead old croc!"
"You kidnapped my kids, Hook. You deserve to die!"
"Put up your swords. It's Hook or me this time!"
"Peter Pan the Avenger!"
Now sit back and watch the end sequence, because you've finished the game!



Because you demanded it, the Snip Tips this month have been expanded to a full two pages. Get cracking!

SNIP



JAGUAR XJ220
Core Design

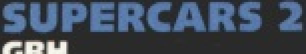
Hooray! There are a couple of cheats coming out of the woodwork for this fantastic racing game so take your pick...

● Before starting, select the radio mode on the CD player and tune it in to 065.4. Once you start the race you should be breaking lap records every time!

● At the start of the race, press the 'P' key to pause the game as soon as the starter says "GO". Un-pause the game (by pressing 'P' again) and you'll win the race without even trying!

AGONY
Pysgnosis

If you can drag yourself away from the amazing title music you might like to type FANTASY anytime during the game. You'll now find that pressing any function key from one to five will let you select any one of the available weapons. Even better, pressing ENTER will move you on a level.



SUPERCARS 2
GBH

A tiny tip for a full quota of missiles, weapons and automatic qualification. All you need to do is enter Player One's name as WONDERLAND and Player Two's as THE SEER and away you go.



CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER
Domark

Thanks to Andrew Clarke from Baddesley Ensor (where?) for this couple of 'Top Tips' for Domark's football management game.

● To raise cash at the end of the season, transfer list all your players over thirty years of age who you no longer require or you feel you could do without. Revalue each one to the highest price you can get away with (just below the figure that gives you the "He's not worth that much" message).

Make sure that they are all insured and then go into the new season process. During the course of this you should get messages that certain players have retired to non-League football. Most players over thirty-one tend to do this if you have listed them or not played them much during the season. Any of your listed and insured players that do retire will give you full value (at the inflated price you were asking) from the insurance company.

● Early on in the season, should you want a certain player that another side will not sell, go to MANAGER'S JOB and select ADD PLAYER.

Now simply add a second false manager, picking the team that refuses to sell you their star. Make the player approachable and sell him to yourself for as lower price as possible, then resign from your second team.



GOBLIIINS
Coktel Vision

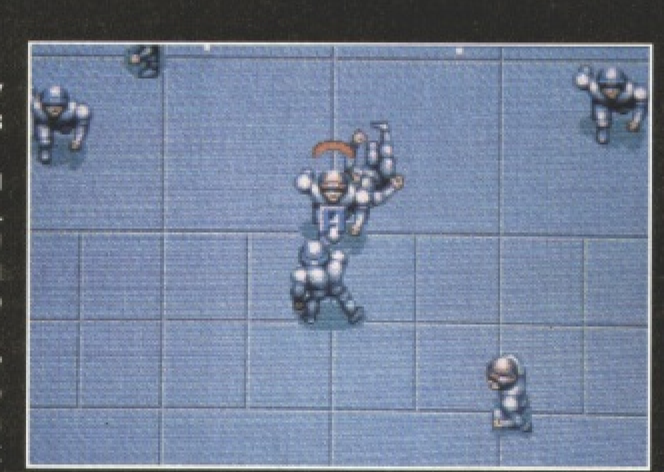
Hey, guess what? Yep, more level codes for you to use. Heartfelt thanks go out to Mark Magee form Portsmouth for this selection.

1 No Code
2 VQVQFDE
3 ICIGCAA
4 ECPQPCC
5 FTQKFEN
6 HQWFTFW
7 DWNDGBW
8 JCJCJHM



TIPS

9 ICVGCGT
10 LQPPCUJV
11 HNWVGKB
12 FTQKVLE
13 DCPLQMH
14 EWDGPNL
15 TCNGTOU
16 TCVQRPM
17 IQDNKQO
18 KKKPURE
19 NGOGKSP
20 NNGWTTO
21 LGWFGUS
22 TQNGFVC



TEST DRIVE 2
Kixx

A quick cheat coming up so get ready. Type GAS at any time during play and you'll be taken to the next petrol station. Over and out.

NARCO POLICE
G.B.H.

There's a number of cheats for this all-action budget re-release. During the game type one of the following 'words' for the effects described below:

NOENEMIG
Makes all enemies disappear.
COMENZAR
Makes all enemies reappear.
ABRIR
Open all doors.
BLAST
Smart bomb.
MUNICON
More ammunition.
NOAMET Z*
No machine guns. Replace the '*' with any number between one and four to jump to the corresponding zone.
NOCAM Z*
No cameras. Replace the '*' with any number between one and four to jump to the corresponding zone.

CARRIER COMMAND
Kixx

A top cheat for the recently re-released flight simulation. Pause the game during play and type GROW OLD ALONG WITH ME (including spaces) and you'll be able to toggle immunity with the '+' and '-' keys. Also try typing THE BEST IS YET TO COME and use the same keys ('+' and '-') to view all the objects in the game.

ZOOL
Gremlin

Not so much a cheat but a slight tippette from Denny Hilton who lives in Newcastle. On the second level of the Music World, jump on the first, third, fifth and seventh keys on the first keyboard. A large musical note should appear which will, when shot, award the player with an extra life. Yippee!

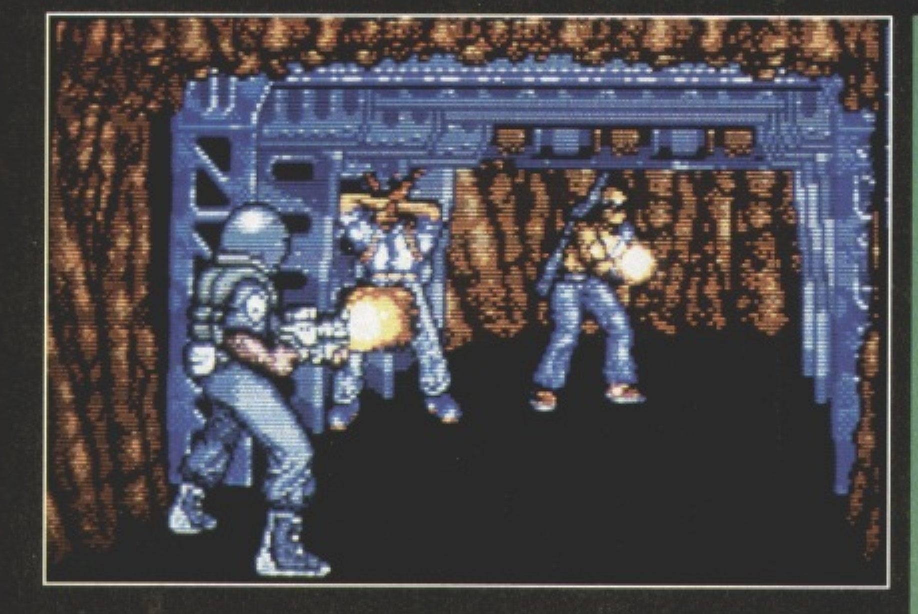
GUY SPY
Readysoft

A snip tip from Adam Leeder from Staines should be just the ticket for those of you stuck on the maze sections in Readysoft's latest. To find your way around you should pay particular attention to the stone slabs on either side of the screen. If slabs on either side are sticking out on the same screen then you should continue straight ahead until you come across some more protruding slabs. If the slabs jut out on the left then turn left and if they stick out on the right then - yes, you guessed it - turn right. Follow this procedure, only changing direction every time you come across different slabs telling you otherwise.

SPEEDBALL 2
Renegade

Speedball 2? What's going on? Yes, yes, yes - we know it's a bit old in the tooth now but we sat down for a quick match one day at the end of the last issue and didn't get back up for a week. Gary was getting so fed up with loosing that he rang up Eric Bitmap to get a few helpful tips and we thought you'd like to share them too.

- MONEY - When you go into the league you begin with 1100 credits. You can go into the gym and train for a bit but the best thing to do is wait until the Star Players come onto the transfer market and snap them up. This will improve your team more than the training and will cost the same amount of money.
- PLAYERS - The most important players in the team are the goalkeeper, centre midfield and the centre forward. These are the best places to stick your Star Players.
- TOKENS - The best tokens to aim for are: Freeze Team, Shield, Transport Ball and Boost Stats, in that order.



WE NEED YOUR TIPS

Come on all you talented gamers! If you discover a tip or a cheat or can knock up some level maps for your favourite game the send them in. If it's okay we'll print it along with your name, meaning instant fame and fortune. People will probably stop you in the street and all that. If we deem it really exceptional we'll even reward you with a top-quality piece of software (and, of course, all that fame and fortune will still count) so come on, send your info to: Snip Tips, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU. We'll be waiting for your call...



GAMES SURGERY

He's back, he's big and he's baaaaad! Yes, Doctor David has returned from his short 'holiday' and is feeling just fine and dandy. He can barely wait to recommence curing the sick and helping the needy. So please, would the first patient step into his office...

Dear Doctor,
About two weeks ago I bought the quite excellent Heart of China. I seemed to be doing quite well - I got Chi to help me, caught the cow and got Chi into the castle. However, when I got Lucky over the wall and we hid behind the pot I found it impossible to move without being seen by the guard and I am totally stuck as to what to do next. Can you help me?
Liston Kiloh,
Bradford.

Your description of your symptoms is a little vague but I think I know where you're stuck. Try the following: Once Lucky has clambered over the wall, go to the castle's gatehouse and take the key. Go into the central palace and wait until the guard marches out of sight then sprint left into the dining room. Does this solve your problem?



Dear Doctor,
Do you have a cheat for Back To The Future 2? It's driving me mad.
Sajjid Raja,
Bedford.

Indeed I do have help for Back To The Future that should get you Back To Health (a little doctor's joke there). Pause the game and type in THE ONLY NEAT THING TO DO (spaces n' all). When you unpause you should have infinite lives and find that the 'Z' key will let you skip to the next level.

Dear Doctor,
That's it. I've had enough. Don't give me any crap, 'Doctor' - I know there has to be a cheat for Xenon 2 so what is it? If I don't find it out soon I'll have to kill something - and it won't be a bloody Xenite, either.
Michael Powell,
Bury St Edmonds.

I must say that I find your aggressive manner somewhat disturbing. Still, that doesn't stop me from helping you. Who knows? Perhaps a little TLC will make you a better person. What you have to do is pause the game then type in RUSSIAN AIR (complete with the space). Unpause the game and then use the N key to skip through the levels.



Dear Doctor,
I've got Hunter and although I've been 'hunting' (ha, ha) for ages I can't find out where the security pass is. Have you got any ideas?
Darren Maull,
Chingford.

Indeed I have. In fact, I have several ideas, often all at the same time. I'm quite clever like that, you know. Anyway, to answer your query the pass can be found at co-ordinates X:90, Y:153. Thank you Mr Maull, and goodbye.

Dear Doctor,
Do you have a cheat for infinite lives and weapons for Z-Out? I've been playing it for ages and I just can't get off the first level.
Wayne Marshall,
Hampshire.

Oh, a lamentable situation indeed. Calm yourself, Mr Marshall, for help is at hand. If it's infinite energy you're after, then press down the Q and K keys simultaneously. Alternatively try pressing Q together with any number key from 1 to 6 to skip levels. Press any number between 1 and 3 on the numeric keypad to skip sections within a level. To jump right to the end of the game (but what's the point?) hit keys Q and 7 together. Feeling better already, am I right?

Dear Doctor,
I am in desperate need of help. I recently got Blood Money and find it impossible to complete the first or second levels. If you have a cheat I would be most grateful.
James Argent,
Cheshunt.

Blood Money is an exceptionally painful complaint, and you have my deepest sympathies. However, maybe these tips will be of use to you. First, press F4 on the options screen and then hold down S and type PONDULIX FOR PM (along with the spaces). Now during the game press HELP for infinite lives and the number keys for extra add-ons and stuff. Pressing 1 on the numeric keypad will give you pots of money, and 4 will take you straight to the shop where you can spend it.

Dear Doctor,
Please have you got a cheat or tip for Gremlins 2? It's hard because they keep popping up everywhere!
Neil Ramdhun,
Westcliff-On-Sea.

There is a cheat for infinite energy, but it's not that easily accessible. You see, first you have to earn a score big enough to get you onto the high-score table. Then, type in SINATRA as your name and - bingo! - infinity is yours.

Dear Sir,
Is there a infinite energy cheat for Line of Fire. If I get shot up once more when I'm just about to reach the end of the game I think I'll go mad. Please help save my sanity.
Paul Cutlass,
Staines.

This tip comes straight from Creative Materials, the programmers of the game themselves, so if this doesn't help you nothing will! During the game type OPERATION FERRET (don't forget the space). You should now have infinite energy, alright? (Hmmmm, 'Sir'. I like the sound of that...)

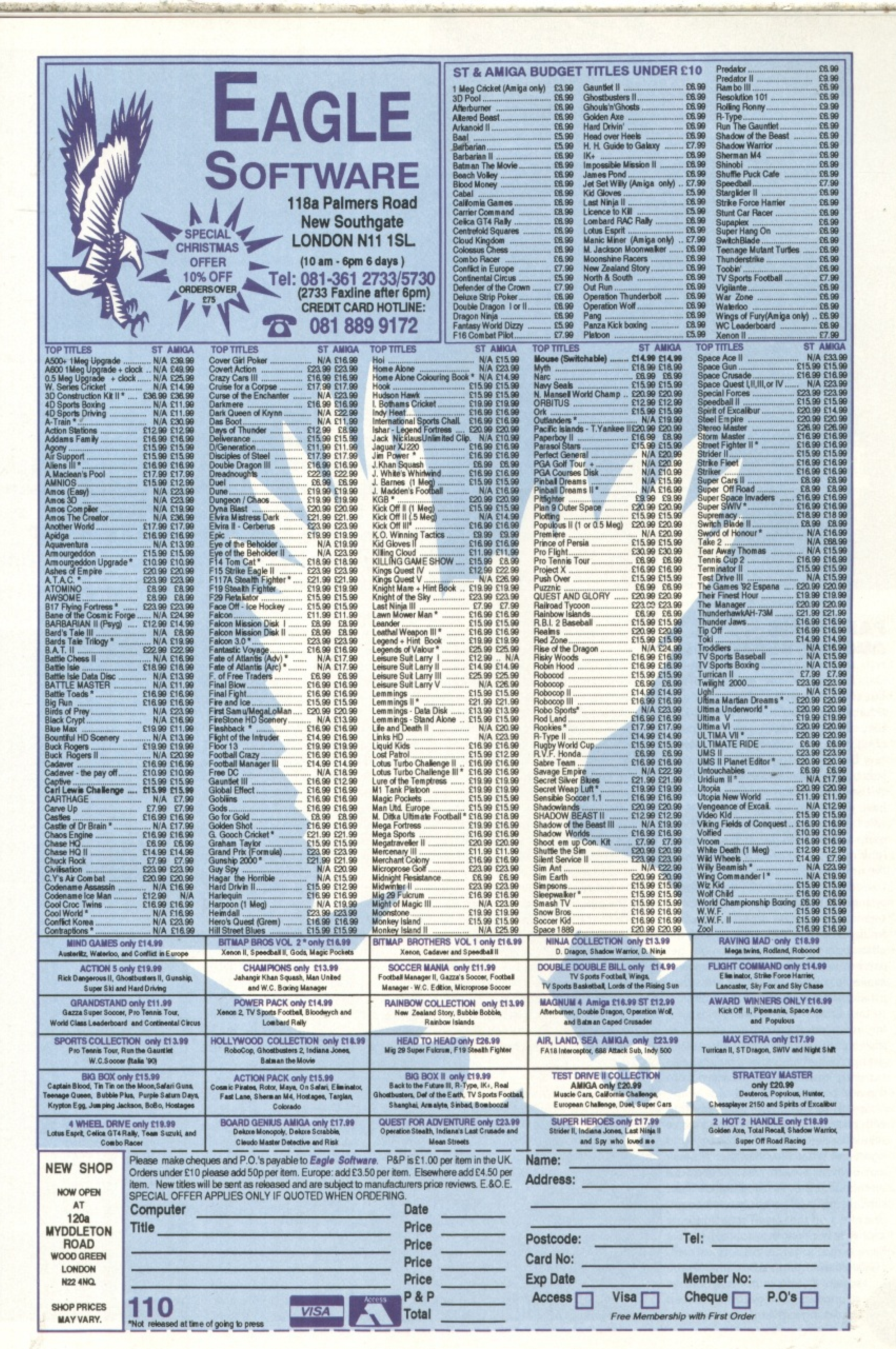
THE DOCTOR WRITES...

Recently many readers have written to me to complain that I provided the wrong cure to Mr Clay's Secret of Monkey Island problem as set out in the August issue of The One. Indeed, they are right and I extend my apologies to all concerned. The correct way to get onto (and not just to) Monkey Island is as follows -

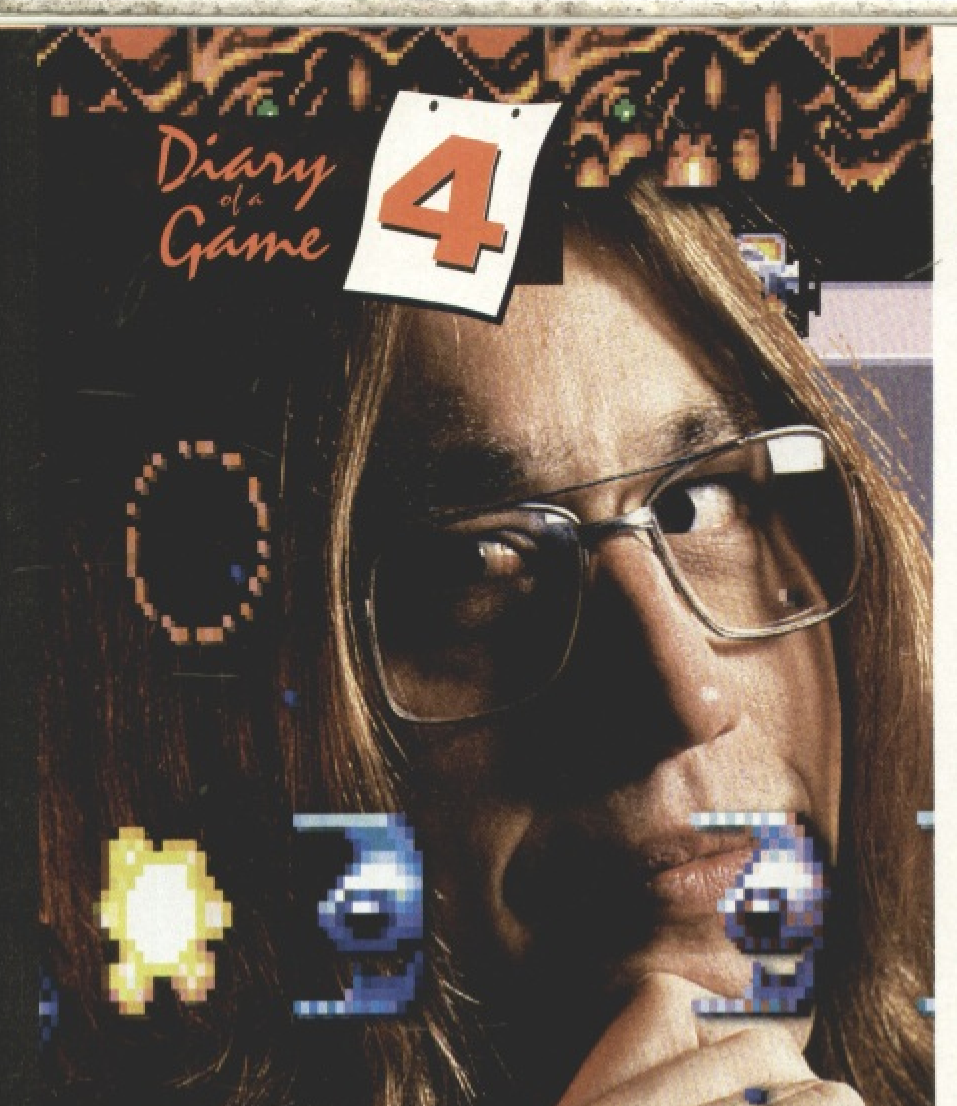
Once the soup is prepared get some more gunpowder and the pot (which is in the galley near the cereal cupboard). Use the giant rope on the cannon to make a fuse. Set light to the cards Stan gave you using the fire beneath the cooking pot. Go back to the cannon and put some gunpowder down the nozzle, then use the pot as a helmet. Light the fuse using the cards, climb into the cannon and - BOOM! - you're on Monkey Island.

THE SURGERY IS NOW CLOSED
As we turn off the lights and lock all the doors, there's just time to remind you that if you're having a problem with a game, scribble a brief description of the symptoms down on a piece of paper and send it to: Dr David Upchurch, Games Surgery, THE ONE, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. And don't forget, the Doctor is a busy man and regrets that he cannot deal with queries over the phone. Sorry!





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URIDIUM 2

The epic saga of the creation of a super-sequel reaches its fourth instalment. At last the dreadnought designs are beginning to take shape, and they're a far cry from those seen in the old C64 classic. Andrew Braybrook, the programming genius coding the game, tells all...

PART FOUR - AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

Tuesday August 25th
Great way to start the new diary. Met Gary Liddon at EMAP Towers while delivering the previous diary part and had a few bevvies with him and The One lads before catching the train home to Witham. Had I stayed awake I might have got off at the right station. As it was I ended up in Harwich, which was quite a shock. You don't want to know how much a taxi costs at that time in the morning.

Had a further play with the weapons systems. A flame-thrower for the robot seemed like a good idea. No graphics for it yet but it works, spraying out the ubiquitous explosion graphics that get used whenever the proper ones aren't available. Also changed the mass devastation weapon as that was a little slow to take effect; usually what I was aiming at had long gone by the time the bullets came out. Now it's a rocket that gets produced and sprays bullets (also currently looking like explosions) from top and bottom.

Spent the afternoon experimenting with plasma - it's a graphic effect we've seen on a demo. It's quite fun trying to figure out what they've done. We may not come up with the exact same method that they're using but we'll get similar results. If you only need to get one effect on the screen you can throw a lot of memory at the problem, but we have to get a game in there as well.

Finally I got some red plasma on the screen. It tends to do really strange things to your eyes if you keep watching it. Weird.

Wednesday August 26th
Now to build a title screen out of my plasma. There's no point in having something pretty if you can't use it. The first thing was to create some nicer looking plasma to work with. The plasma is now more ordered and curvy so it's easier to see what's happening. Since these things like being left/right symmetrical and there's no point in wasting memory, I wrote a routine to reflect half the picture across the screen.

The reflection routine didn't quite work but the effect was really wacky - the screen was stretching up and down and I still haven't sussed out why. Part of the optimisation involved only plotting the plasma in sixteen colours, leaving me the other sixteen to add text over the top. Then I got to thinking - since there isn't much CPU time left after the plasma is plotted, why not write Uridium in giant size letters in another plasma colour? All I have to do is teach a cursor to drive around the screen, printing up big letters. This turned out to be just like writing a turtle program in Logo. Tedious or what?

Tuesday 1st September
Really did go on holiday this time. Returned to find Phillip drawing full 32-colour backgrounds, contrary to instructions as usual. Still, if you can't beat 'em, put in all the routines to display the full 32-colour graphics.

I've been changing the colours around on the block font to make it even more readable, since the whole world and his dog say "Yeah, it's really pretty but what does it say?". Everybody, that is, except Phillip, who just said "Yeuck!" - but then he says that about anything that he didn't draw himself. I've had a go at redrawing one or two of the letters to make more readable shapes. The 'R' is causing trouble as most of the letters are capitals, but the 'R' is actually an 'r'.

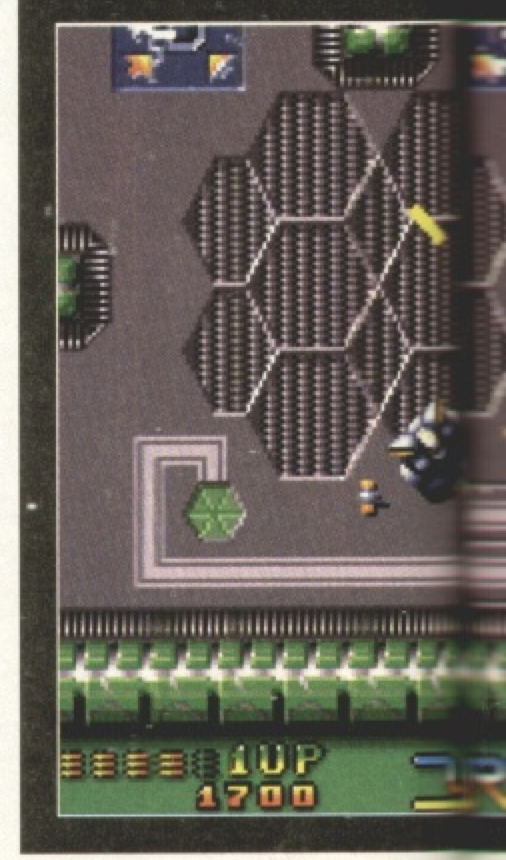
Wednesday 2nd September
Spent nearly all day battling with different linker output formats. All I want to do is load the game in relocatable format so I can store the code wherever the machine's extra RAM is, but I want my variables to be short-word addressed in the top 32K of the Amiga's memory for extra speed. ALink format seems to support 16-bit relocation data but I can't persuade SNLink to produce the right output. Can anybody help? I just want one section, namely my variables, to be linked absolute in word-addressable memory.

Thursday 3rd September
We need to put together a demo for the European Computer Trade Show next week. Jason has started converting his music into our format and hopes to have some token sound effects ready. We still have no backgrounds but the mapper is nearly ready to at least try to put a map in. I've commissioned some more graphics from another of our graphics artists, Mark Bentley, so I've not got any dummy sprites in the game. If only we had an extra 24 hours we could put so much more in.

Friday 4th September
Getting close to show-time and the mapper is available for its first test - no guarantees, no nothing. The music and some trial sound-effects have been set up by Jason. Unfortunately the graphics didn't get finished and I was left with

(Below) For the sake of the ECTS demo, Andrew re-used some old Paradroid 90 graphic blocks to flesh out the backgrounds inside the dreadnought.

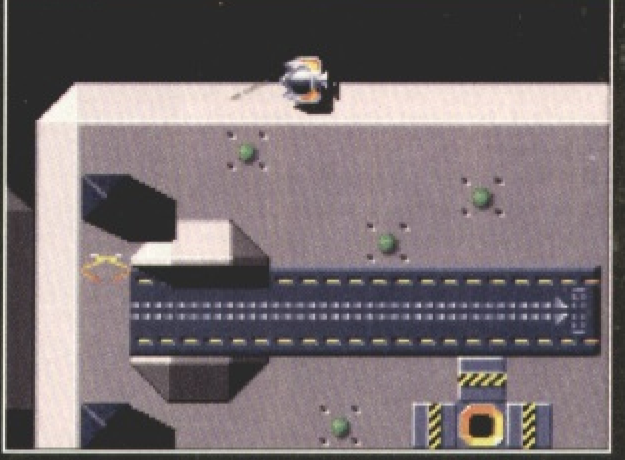
(Below right) Having destroyed all the generators inside the ship the mission is complete. The droids must then find the lift-off pad, transform back into Mantas and make good their escape.



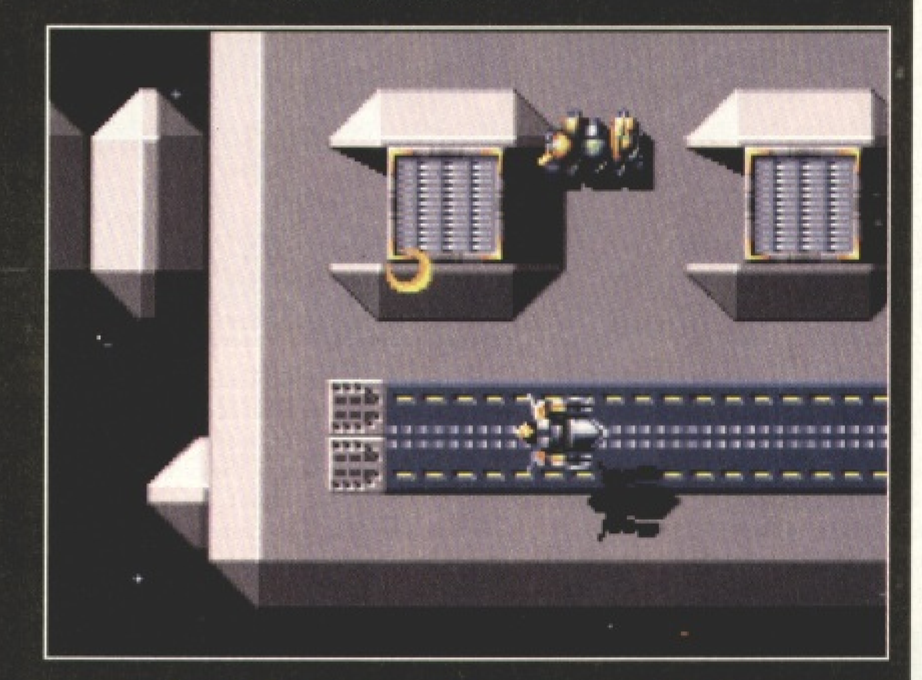




Now that some of the new ship graphics are in place Uridium 2 is really beginning to shape up. The organic look is very 'Alien', don't you think? Here you can see the pretty bubble laser in action.



(Above and below) These shots are from the demo Andrew knocked together for the ECTS using old graphic blocks. Note the Manta transforming into the robot in the shot below.



" No-one who played the game today noticed the tweaks that I had applied to the control modes. They nag like little kids for changes and then don't notice when they happen. "



a sheet of really pretty organic graphics that I had no idea how to slot together.

The mapper held up fairly well until I tried to put its output into the game. I have had to resort to using my old graphics so I can see what is going on. The mapper is somewhat to say the least, but this is its first test. Normally I'd wait for it to be fixed but with the show looming I'll have to program my way out of this by reformatting the map and character set data within the game itself.

Monday 7th September

Show day. Uridium 2 gets its first showing to the press, unfortunately without any real backgrounds in it. It's also the first time that Renegade, the publishers, have had a good look at it. Had a Cuban dinner in the evening with the Bitmaps (name-dropper) to celebrate the completion of another Graftgold project, Gods, on the Sega Megadrive. If you'd like to play this game, write to Sega Europe and tell them so. It's rather good.

Tuesday 8th September

Now is the time to re-organise things in the machine and to free up some of that valuable chip RAM by moving the game code to fast RAM. That means that I have to tangle with Amiga relocatable link format, which is pretty horrible, and I have to sneakily redefine my variables because Amiga link format does support short word addressing but SNASM won't actually produce any short word addressed sections. Why not, chaps? Not everyone wants to run system legal stuff, you know.

Still, a wily programmer can find ways round this. I've written a scatter-loader that locates the Amiga's fast RAM, puts my code there and then relocates it. It's like picking your house up and moving it down the street, then changing the number on the house to fit in with the houses on either side of it. Then it has to tell the post office where it is, but it still knows where the post office is because that hasn't moved.

What am I drivelling on about?

Wednesday 9th September

Taken the whole program apart today to define my variables in a different way. The main objective is to split the program into two lumps, one that can be relocated into fast RAM, and one that can't be relocated because it's too messy. Then I have to set up a communications area to allow the two halves to communicate. This will mostly be one-way traffic. Both halves get bolted back together again while debugging to speed things up.

All this monkeying around took about five hours. Now I need to come up with a way to test it. I don't think that just letting rip with a code relocator is a good strategy. It needs to be traced slowly to identify places



where it may go wrong. That will be tomorrow's job. Mustn't do this too quickly - I told Renegade it could take three weeks! Of course, it still might.

Thursday 10th September
Got the code relocator working which now officially frees up about 80K of chip RAM for more graphics and sound, which is good news because it wouldn't all fit before. Jason wants more memory for samples because he wants to put speech in.

On the game front I've changed some of the parameters of the control modes to make them more responsive. The Manta turns quicker, as do the robots which also move a little faster too. That helps to squash the thugs. Also in is a new mass devastation weapon that fires lasers in an arc around the ship.

Friday 11th September
Sorted out some niggling bugs. Bad initialisation caused weird things to happen as some flags weren't being cleared out to start with, including a pause flag so the first game automatically paused itself. It's a case of studying the symptoms and deducing what can possibly be the cause of them, and then figuring out what has caused the cause. Knock-on effects can have a programmer chasing the wrong thing for days.

Needless to say, no-one who played the game today noticed the tweaks that I applied to the control modes. They nag like little kids for changes and then don't notice when they happen. Further tweaks included making the homing missiles turn slower while they accelerate away from being fired (that makes them look more realistic) and a smart-bomb that hits all targets on-screen with the appropriate stroboscopics.

Monday 14th September
Set Phillip up with a PC and the mapper to create the first real map of background graphics. A few teething troubles needed to be eradicated and we have a list of changes for the mapper already. Still no mouse to use with it, so cursor keys it is. Not very efficient.

Jason has produced some speech to put in, expanding the size of the sound samples from 90K to around 140K. This is going to be a tight squeeze indeed.

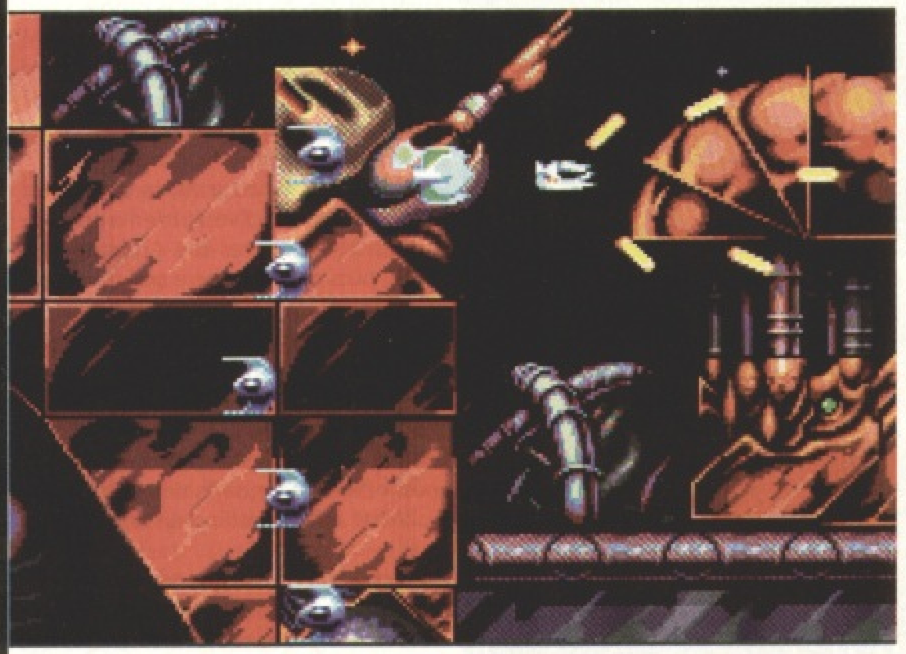
Great care is needed when flying around near the dreadnought's mighty engines - even brushing the white-hot exhaust flames will melt the Mantas into scrap.



The Mantas on a bombing run down a trench in the dreadnought's surface. Although the bombs look nice they have one big drawback at the moment - the Manta can't fire forward, leaving it open to enemy attack.

The speech seems to be centred around picking up bits of a few key words, 'Playsern' being one of them. For example, by missing out the 's' and the 'n' you get 'Player', and by dropping the 'P' and the 'n' you get 'laser'.

Added a grenade weapon for the robot which is equivalent to the bombs of the Manta. Great for taking out the generators, not so good at hitting the thugs. Discovered a deep-rooted bug which was giving infinite use of some weapons which were supposed to be limited. That one could, and I emphasise could, have been the cause of a mysterious crash one time that has been sitting at the back of my mind, nagging away.



Tuesday 15th September
Getting close to diary delivery time and the game doesn't LOOK that much different from last month. Of course, it has had loads of new features added and all the sound but what comes across in pictures? Graphics, and they're still the same. Better crack the old whip on the graphics department. Also on the agenda is making up a demo to take to EMAP towers. It would be a really bad idea to wait until the day to try and make up a demo considering what I've just done to the game regarding its internal arrangements.

My initial strategy of making up a hybrid debug 'all-in-one' version but with a live load was flawed. I couldn't get the thing to load in and survive, and it took ages to make up the disk. The trouble with the live version is you get no help if it crashes. Next plan is to make up a full live version with relocating code and all. This also failed. Getting desperate now, so start putting border colour changes into the code to see where it gets to. Didn't even hit the first one. This is bizarre.

After two or three hours of head scratching I decided to just download the first part of the game to the Amiga and have a look at it. "That's not my code!" I cried. I had linked the game together in the wrong mode, so I got a Cross Products Executable code instead of pure binary. Realisation of the problem caused so much relaxation I could have gone into hibernation.

Mid-afternoon and the demo is made up, loading code and music in on its own. Lucky that as I'd already wrecked the show demo disk trying to put the new version on it. Now I can concentrate on making up a new demo with new graphics knowing that I have a fall-back disk.

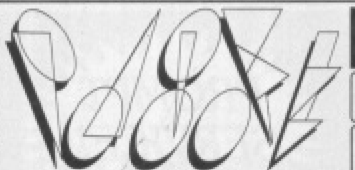
Wednesday 16th September
Took delivery of the first part of the new ship layout with new graphics. This map is huge and I really mean HUUUUUGE. Phillip has gone mad on the scale. I've never had a map this big before and driving around it highlighted a new bug. The scrolling system blew it going downwards after about a screen and a half. Rather a fundamental error in there somewhere and finding it means remembering how it all works. Those bits of code assumed to be working do tend to get forgotten about.

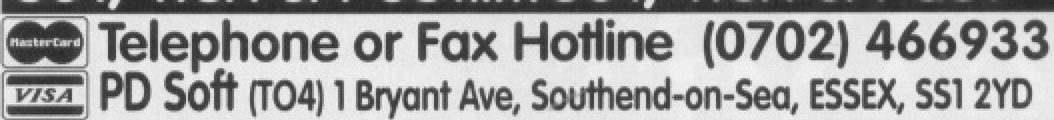
Thursday 17th September
Last minute thrashing about to get a demo ready to have some pictures taken. The first map is nearly complete and at least you can fly over it. The extra size has highlighted a need to generate the attack formations near the player. Trying to destroy a wave of fighters spread over the whole map width would be too difficult.

Last minute panic problems included a renegade tank that drove off the screen because its control data had been corrupted by our operating system looking for extra chip RAM. The program is already more that 512K long. That's just too big to manage. I'll probably drop the sound out now that it is working.

NEXT MONTH!

Uridium 2 enters its fifth month of development, and once again we'll be there with the very latest graphics and white-hot game design secrets, all direct from the horse's mouth! And remember, this is the ONLY place you'll read it...




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Customisation. The game will allow you to take the European nation of your choice and you will be allocated an initial squad of 16 players. You can introduce a further 34 players, making 50 in all, whose names and skills (but not levels) You can define yourself. These players are introduced gradually as you discover the weaknesses in your squad and also to create the balance of skills that match your style of play. The original 16 players can be defined in the same way using the EDIT program (free with the game) if you wish as well as the teams that will make up the opposition.

In the traditional number-juggling soccer management game wing-backs, sweepers, formations, styles, tactics are, at best, cosmetic, at worst , meaningless. The unique match simulation at the heart of Soccer Supremo restores all these and more, allowing genuine control over team performance. In addition to the visual feedback on your team, this match allows substitions, tactical positional changes and workrate instructionsto individual players which then influence the flow of the match. The increased realism and control transforms the supreme, but childish, gameplay of the traditional game into a compulsive simulation..

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David Upchurch enters that dark and mysterious realm where nothing is quite what it seems, time runs backwards and games are free - the PD Zone!





ACT OF WAR

Shareware (1Mb). 17 Bit, disk 2197.

If you've ever played the oldy Laser Squad or the more recent Space Crusade then you'll probably feel right at home with Act of War. It doesn't boast any fancy isometric-3D graphics like the Gremlin game, but the basic theme is the same - control a team of crack space commando types as they engage in all manner of strategy-heavy missions (well, just three missions, actually, although more will be sent to you if you pay your Shareware fee).

Having selected a mission, a difficulty setting and the number of players (one or two can take part), you have the option to tool up 'your boys' from the variety of futuristic firepower on offer, each carefully designed to deal death on the unsuspecting enemy in a particularly loud and messy way.

During play you're presented with a number of control icons allowing you to move your troops, make them fire and so forth, and the results of your orders are shown in a large top-down-viewed 'action' window. There's an overall mission map which is handy for coordinating your team's movements, with each man's position shown by a tiny flashing pixel.

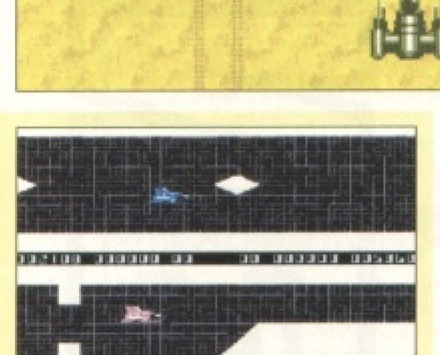
Act Of War isn't going to be everybody's cup of tea, but it's nicely done and quite enjoyable. If strategy games are your bag then you should get your money's worth out of this.

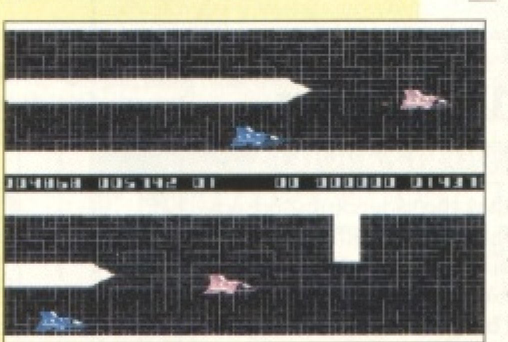




TURBO THRUST

Public Domain (512K). 17 Bit, disk 2200.





These future sport games all have the same sort of plot, don't they? You know - war's been abolished and to keep the thrill-hungry TV viewers happy the authorities have invented a super-violent sport blah, blah, blah or something. And Turbo Thrust is no different. Trouble is, I can't see how this particular future sport would get a frail old granny's pulse pounding, let alone some blood-crazed psychopath's.

In essence it's a two-player race game. Each player controls a spaceship as it flies through a horizontally-scrolling tunnel (the screen is split down the middle so that each player has their own window on the, ahem, 'action'). The aim is to fly as fast as possible and complete a set number of laps before the other player. Sounds quite jolly, doesn't it?

But it's not in practice. The big problem is that the ships are just a little too slow to manoeuvre, especially when they're whizzing along at top speed, resulting in frequent crashes with the landscape. Each crash kills the ships' speed (and any sense of excitement) dead. Once you've learned the course lay-outs things improve a bit, but the flow of play is still too stop-start for any real adrenalin to start flowing. File under 'A good idea but...'

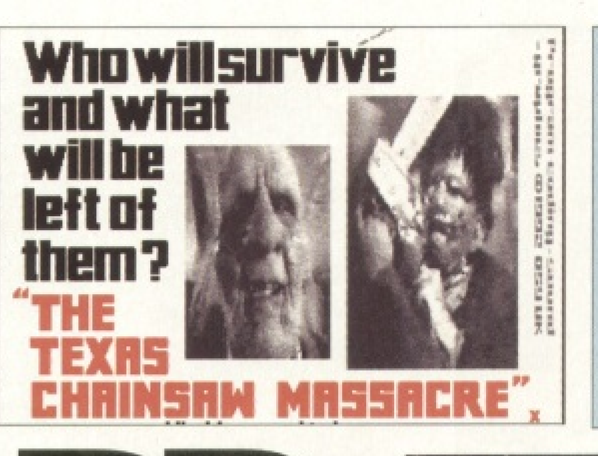
LIBERATOR

Public Domain (512K). 17 Bit, disk 2199.

Yes, it's spot the clone time. Liberator is a vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up along the lines of SWIV, i.e. fly through a gradually varying landscape, zapping the bad guys. Or, at least, trying to zap the bad guys. Your ship seems to have been armed with the 21st Century equivalent of a air-pellet rifle, because to destroy even a single alien takes about fifty shots. Forget trying to destroy a wave of 'em - you've barely got the time to destroy one before they zip away off-screen. And to cap it all off the aliens have a nasty habit of not firing off a shot until they're right up close and you haven't got a hope in Hell of avoiding it. Nasty.

Now I don't know about you, but my idea of action-packed fun is not cowering in the corner of the screen, watching as the not-very-well drawn scenery slowly scrolls by below. And sadly this is what playing Liberator boils down to.





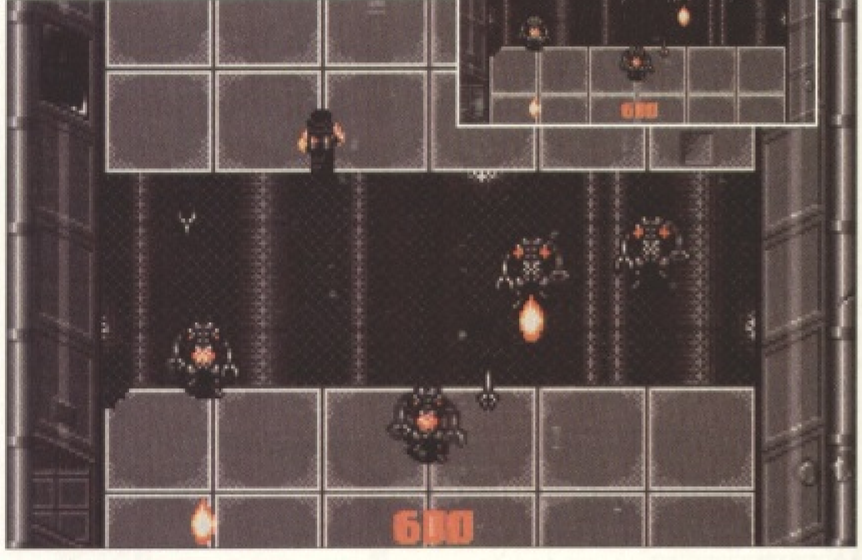
CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE...

Thanks to all the libraries who sent in stuff. The addresses of those companies featured this issue are:

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TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

Shareware (1Mb). 17 Bit, disk 2192.

Bet this is one film tie-in you never thought you'd see. The player takes on the envious role of Leatherface, the classic horror film's mask-wearing, electric-chainsaw-wielding 'hero'. Viewed from a top-down perspective (like Gauntlet), the player has to guide the leather-clad lovely around the scrolling landscape, messily chopping up the clean-shaven, all-American teenagers who mill aimlessly about. There's no 'death' as such - you are Leatherface, after all - but the game ends if your chainsaw runs out of petrol. Fortunately, though, handy refills can be found if you look hard enough.

And that's it really. It's good fun, if a little slow, and the gory blood-spattered deaths are a right hoot (well, they are if you share my deranged sense of humour) but it all wears thin very quickly. There's no progression in the challenge or the setting - you just keep wandering around the same scenery, endlessly killing similar-looking people. Good for a quick giggle, though.

SECTOR ONE

Public Domain (512K). Fortiss PD, Assassins 32.

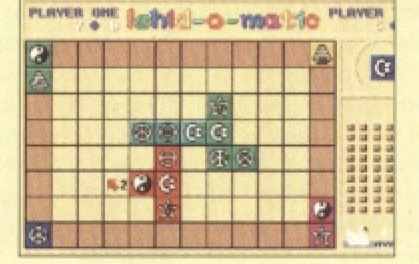
Sector One is a mutant hybrid of Alien Breed and Smash T.V. The player guides his space marine (who bears a curious resemblance to Rambo) up the vertically-scrolling corridors of an alien-infested space station, blasting the gruesome insectoid aliens (who have the rather impressive ability to spit fireballs) and the scuttling facehuggers, while avoiding the pools of acid blood and the alien claws poking through the broken walkways.

The game was created using the Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit and it's not bad for a game of its type. However, like me you'll soon find your patience tested by the abysmal collision detection, whereby shots that are a good centimetre away from you on-screen still kill. This wouldn't be so annoying if your marine was a bit nippier on his feet and could dodge in time but he isn't. And the situation isn't made any better by the fact that to scroll the play area you have to walk right near the top of the screen, meaning you have even less time to avoid the nasties and their attacks.

ISHID-O-MATIC

Public Domain (512K). Fortiss PD, Assassins 31.

No prizes for guessing that this is a computerised interpretation of the classic boardgame Ishido. It plays a bit like Shanghai in reverse, in that instead of removing tiles with the aim of clearing the board the player has to place tiles on the board with the aim of getting rid of all the tiles. The tiles come in a variety of colours and designs and, having randomly selected one, the player may only place it next to another with the same colour and/or the same design. This is pretty easy at first but as the board starts filling up the potential slots for the tile you've just drawn get harder and harder to find.



It's surprisingly addictive (much like Shanghai is) and this version has a lot to recommend. The graphics are crisp and clear, the player interface (all point-n'-click) is a pleasure to use and there's a wealth of options such as one or two players, tournament play, music while you work and so on. All-in-all, a highly enjoyable experience and a pleasant respite from endless shooting and killing.

AAIIEEEE! ASSASSINS!

Yes, indeedy! Yet more games compilations from those Assassins chappies. They don't stop, do they? The rundown is as follows...

THE ASSASSINS DISK 31

ISHID-O-MATIC - Reviewed elsewhere.
CRAZY PIPE - Okay-ish Pipemania rip-off.
ARAZMAX - Not very playable Asteroids-style shoot-'em-up.
REVOLUTION - On this month's coverdisk!

THE ASSASSINS DISK 32

This is a collection of three games created with the Shoot-'Em-Up Construction Kit, namely SECTOR ONE (reviewed elsewhere), FIRE FIGHTER (reviewed last issue) and BLOB (which is alright, in a SEUCK kind of way).

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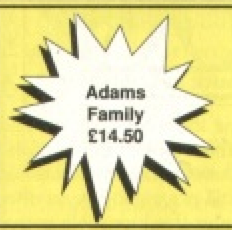
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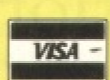
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CHEAPOS!

Simon Byron sat hunched over his word-processor, the electronic beast staring at him, taunting him. "Go on. Write the introduction to the new all-singing, all-dancing Cheapos - if you dare," it hissed.

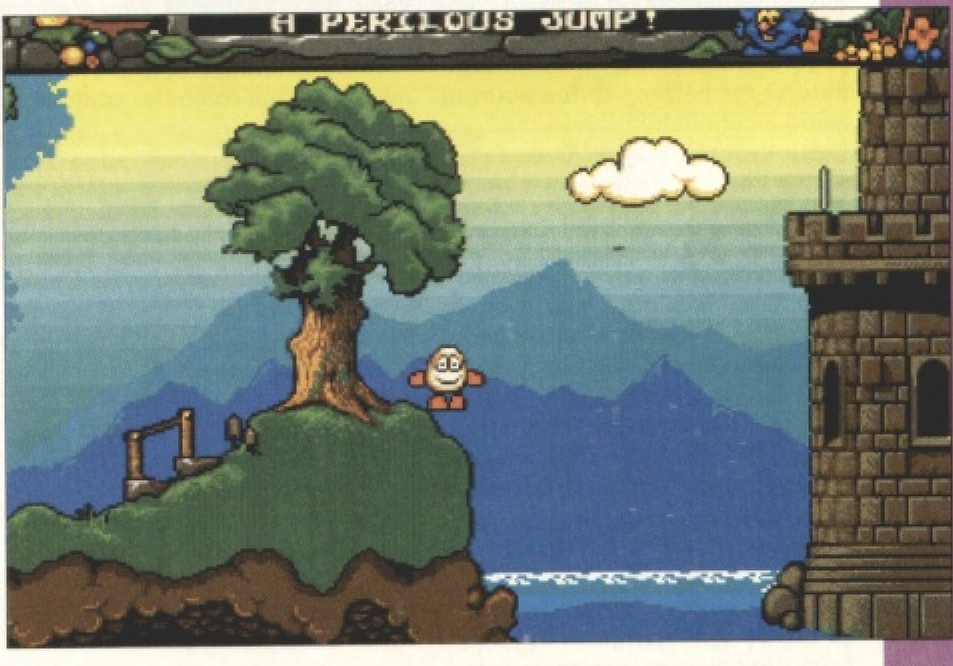
"But what can I write?" questioned the dashing young software journo. "As everybody knows, it's the ONLY place to read informative and entertaining reviews on the budget games released this month. What else is there to say?" And with that The One's teaboy started to cry.

At this point Simon's Fairy Godmother appeared. "Whatever's the matter, my son?" she inquired.

"I've got all this space to fill up and I can't think of anything else to say about the Cheapos," he bawled. "Please help me, Fairy Godmother."

"It's okay, dear boy. I already have."







DIZZY - PRINCE OF THE YOLKFOLK

Codemasters £7.99

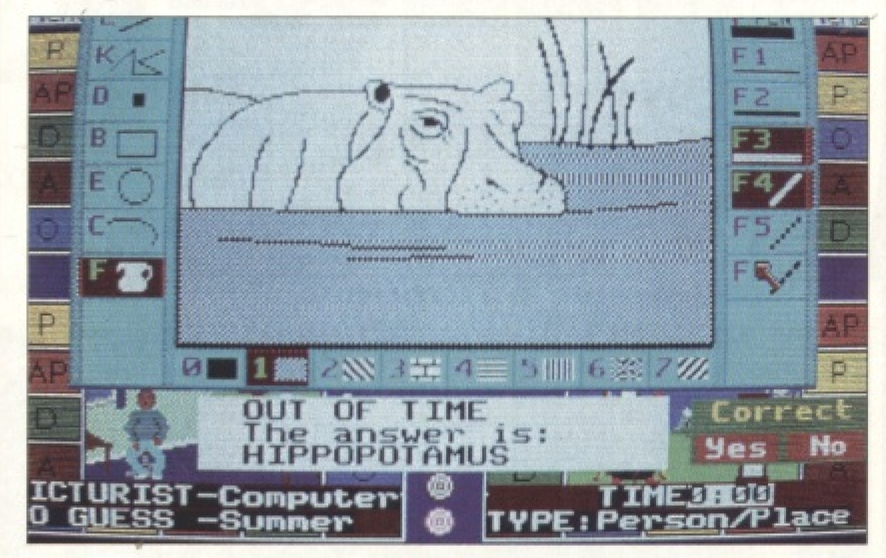
Cheapos' favourite spherical star is back! Yes, Dizzy, the original budget-sized hero, returns in the latest egg-tastic release from the Codemasters' games factory. The story is fairly predictable but I'll run through it briefly for you anyway, just so that you know. Whilst out collecting cherries for Grand Dizzy's surprise cherry pie, Dizzy and Daisy stumble across a mysterious castle which they both decide to explore. Then, tragedy. Daisy pricks herself on a mystic spinning wheel and falls into a deep, deep sleep. Before Dizzy has a chance to do anything to help her, Rockwart the Troll catches him and locks our young eggy friend in a dank, dark cave.

Dizzy's got quite a task on his hands in this arcade adventure (although the initial cave situation doesn't exactly require a lot of deep thought - what else can you do when you're stuck in one location behind a wooden door with some leaves, a match and bucket of water? It's obvious - just place the leaves in the bucket and set fire to your bottom, of course). The majority of the later puzzles are similarly straightforward and you'll often know where to use the items you pick up along the way without any problem.

As for the 'arcade' part of the game, well, a few of the locations require some frustratingly pixel-perfect leaping and I can't help thinking that the game would have been slightly improved if jumping was initiated by pressing fire instead of pushing up on the joystick. That's just a tiny niggle, though, as most of the time the landscape is easily negotiated.

The Prince of the Yolkfolk is a pleasant enough game with bold, colourful sprites and lovely colouring-book backdrops. It sounds fairly nice, too, and the whole game is generally fine in an unsurprising way. I say unsurprising because this is a game that does what it does well enough and leaves it at that. You'll not find yourself astounded by the gameplay nor too taxed with the puzzles and I doubt if it'll take you too long to finish it. If you do buy this game then you'll definitely not be disappointed but neither will it become one of your all-time favourite games - you'll just think "Hmmm...this is fairly nice." Which, funnily enough, is what I did.

RATING: 70%



PICTIONARY

The Hit Squad £7.99

There are some things in life that puzzle me. Take the stuff about the 'birds and the bees', for instance. I haven't got a clue what that's all about. And why do people listen to all this so-called 'Rave' music? I've no idea. But the thing that puzzles me the most is this: Why on earth do software companies insist on trying to convert popular boardgames to home computers? It's baffling to the point of being incomprehensible!

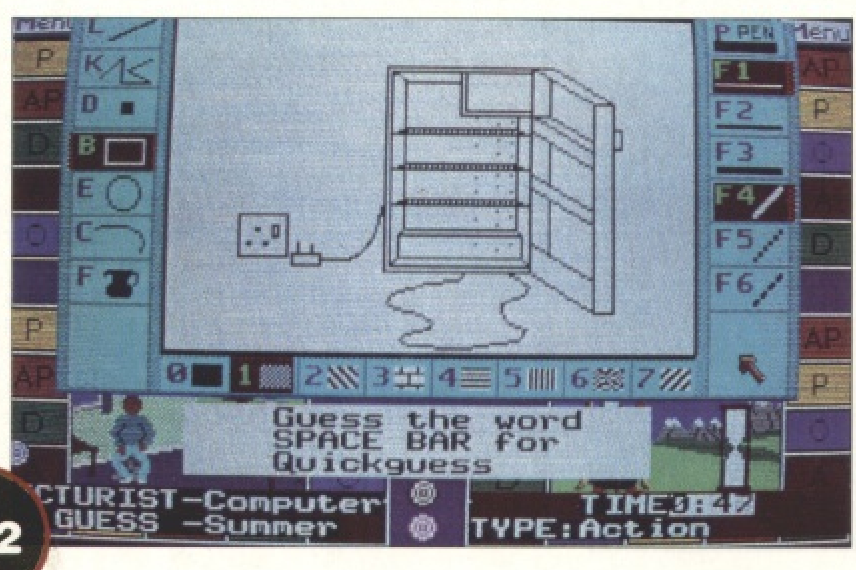
Surely they realise that, faced with a choice, most people would choose to sit cross-legged on the carpet playing on a real live board with a group of drunken friends and no-one paying much attention to the proceedings. Now we all know that computers are excellent things that can provide the lone gamer with many hours of entertainment and excitement but, unfortunately, they are rather crap at providing fun for a group.

A boardgame conversion is acceptable when the computer can actually improve upon the basic gameplay of the original. But apart from providing an electronic friend to play against, what enhancements are possible with games like Monopoly and Cluedo (to name but two) beyond the computer dealing a random set of cards and throwing the dice for you, all of which are an integral part of the game and tasks you can quite easily manage on your own without any help from your Amiga.

But, hey, all this is really besides the point - we're here to take a look at Pictionary (although I think that the more perceptive among you know what's coming). Why anybody attempted this conversion in the first place is beyond me. The only advantage the computer edition has over the ordinary game is that it is possible to play alone, something the original was never designed for.

Assuming that you do have some friends, though, the limitations of the program soon become apparent. The core of the program, the drawing bit, is presented as sort of poor man's Deluxe Paint and I cannot think of anybody who'd rather play Pictionary with a mouse when it is far easier (and more enjoyable) to use the old fashioned pencil and paper. Can't people just leave alone good old traditional values and stop trying to forcefeed all this technology down our throats? Whatever next - computerised origami?

RATING: 41%



TERMINATOR 2: JUDGMENT DAY

The Hit Squad £7.99



If ever there was a film tailor made for conversion it was Terminator 2. The box-office smash was full to the point of overflowing with special effects and action sequences, so much so that the game couldn't fail to be a smasheroo too. But, as you know, life's never that simple.

It's typical of Ocean's old approach to film conversions before the likes of Robocop 3 and Hook, i.e. string together a few simplistic subgames, each supposedly representing a setpiece from the film, resulting in an unsatisfying mish-mash of gamestyles. Terminator 2 has eight such subgames; three beat-'em-up, two puzzle, two 'driving' and one scrolling shoot-'em-up. None of them are particularly outstanding and some are just plain boring.

The presentation is nice with okay-ish digitised sequences popping up between most sections and the music conveys the hard, industrial feel of the film very nicely. Unfortunately Ocean couldn't use Arnie's face in the actual game, so what we are supplied with is a rather squat, cartoony caricature of our Austrian hero with the rest of the in-game graphics failing to impress at all.

I could live with the aforementioned graphics if there was at least some gameplay hidden in there somewhere, but sadly (you guessed it) there appears to be none. The beat-'em-up sections consist mainly of rapidly stabbing at the fire button and the player never really feels as if he is in control of the main sprite at all (partly due to the fact that it moves soooo slowly). The driving sections are yawnsome and the scrolling shoot-'em-up is just abysmal. The game also suffers from being far too easy and I think the average player will complete it within their first ten goes (at the most).

Overall this is a really disappointing game which could have been the conversion to end them all. Given Ocean's recent film tie-in successes, I think that this is one game that would've been best left forgotten. Even at this budget price it doesn't warrant a purchase unless you're a collector of duff, dull film conversions, and if that's you then you are a very sad man indeed.



RATING: 39%



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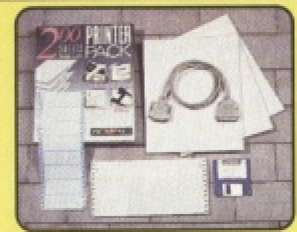
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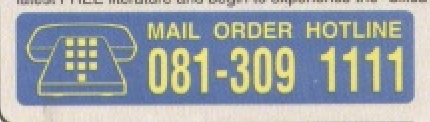
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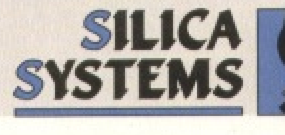
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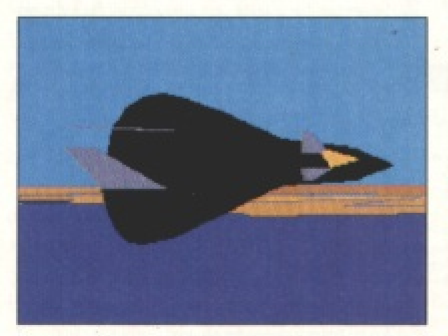


HEAD TO HEAD

Domark £34.99

"The ultimate confrontation, F-19 versus MiG-29 SuperFulcrum!" - that's what the blurb says on the box so it must be true. The box title is slightly misleading, though - I thought you'd be able to link the two games together somehow and play at being pilots of the different aircraft with a friend. Not so. What we have here is a compilation of two of the most respected flight-sims in the genre.

First up, then, is MiG-29 Superfulcrum - the sequel to MiG 29. The battleground is 'somewhere in mid-South America' with the player involved in an attempt to overthrow a military coup which has control of some 20000-square kilometres. The usual U.N. resolutions are passed and a peacekeeping force is dispatched to 'kick ass'. Hooray! All this is background information is, of course, superficial really - what you want to know is how easy is it to kill things?



Well, luckily there seem to be only a few option screens and if you wish you can jump straight in at the deep end and get into the air almost immediately. The controls aren't over-complex and within a few minutes you'll be flipping the aircraft all over the shop. The landscape moves quite smoothly, with an 'interesting' mountain effect rearing its head now and again, and the external views provided are comprehensive to say the least.

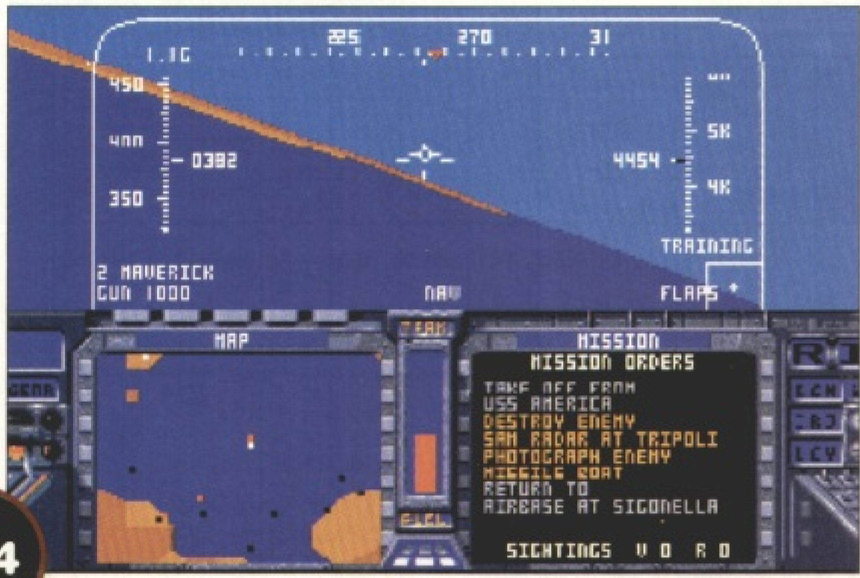
Overall, MiG 29 Superfulcrum provides exactly what you'd expect from a top flight-sim, with fast-moving, nicely-drawn graphics and gameplay which, although not exactly action-packed all of the time, will surely satisfy most Amiga pilots.

Next is F-19 Stealth Fighter, a sim based around the now infamous super-sexy bomber that did wonders for 'our boys' in the Gulf War. Originally released to high praise the game still proves to be just as exciting as any 'modern' sim, with options galore and external views a-plenty. Everything seems to be in order in the graphics, sonics and gameplay departments and the whole package hangs together superbly. The manual provides you with all the necessary info regarding the numerous scenarios and tactics required to successfully fly the world's most expensive aircraft. Possibly the stronger of the two flight simulations bundled together in this compilation, F-19 provides action most of the way through.

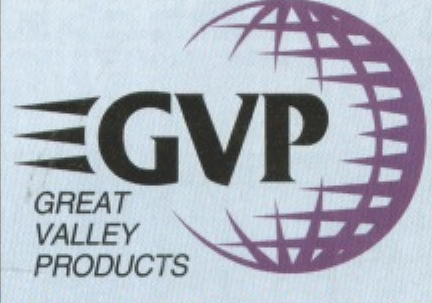


All-in-all, both F-19 and MiG 29M are high-class games. The only slight problem I have with them is that they aren't as instantly accessible as my personal favourite Knights Of The Sky was (although it's a little unfair of me to compare these two games to the World War 1 sim). If modern day aircraft warfare is what you're after (and you haven't got either of these games) then I can't see that you can go far wrong with Head To Head.

RATING:







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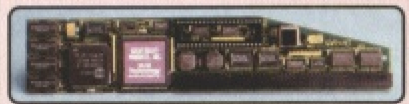
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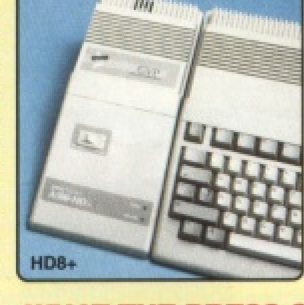


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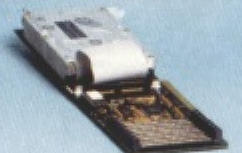
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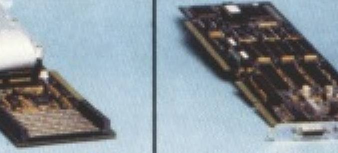


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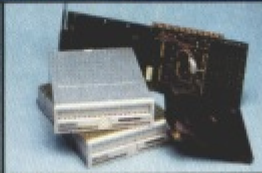


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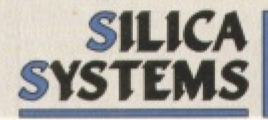
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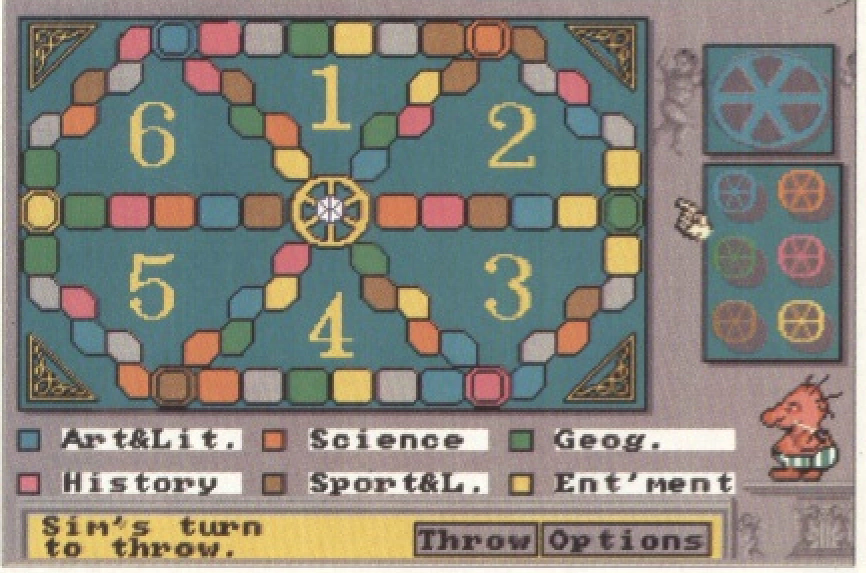
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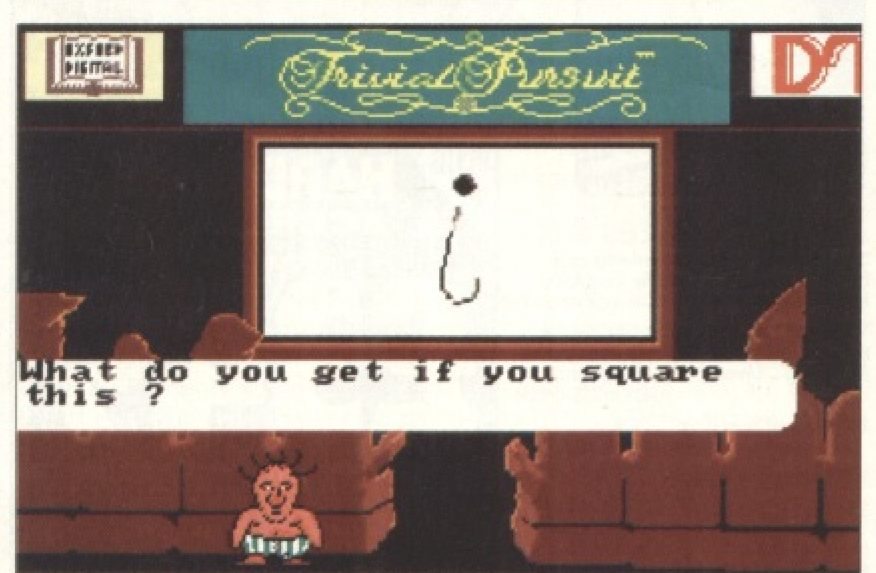
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CHEAPOS!







TRIVIAL PURSUIT

The Hit Squad £7.99

It's just my bloody luck, isn't it? Do I live on Board Game Avenue or something? First I get Pictionary to review and now Trivial Pursuit. This isn't necessarily a bad thing, though, as both games are a different type of conversion and Triv serves to prove my point that boardgames can be converted well when there are obvious ways in which the computer can enhance on or improve upon the original.

Triv was a boardgame phenomenon when released upon the unsuspecting public in the early eighties. Within a few years every self-respecting party host would possess such a game for those moments when the conversation began to run dry. The short phrase "Game of Triv, anyone?" would inject a new lease of life into a flagging dinner party and within seconds of the offer people would be dividing themselves into teams, forming new alliances and trying to team up with the attractive girlie in a vain attempt to impress her with a fantastic display of general knowledge and subsequently receive a free snog.

The questions, as related via the animated cutesy quizmaster TP, vary from the traditional text-based ones to more elaborate graphics- and sound-related posers, i.e "Which film starts with this piece of music: Dum dummmmm dummmm, da darr, dum dum dum, etc." Although initially amusing, the time TP takes to traverse the rooms to put on his stereo and all that soon becomes a bore and the option to turn him off is welcome. The game does look and sound somewhat dated now, but if you can live with the rather duff graphics and presentation they shouldn't detract from the basic gameplay - after all Triv is Triv no matter how it looks.

As I mentioned earlier, games such as Pictionary offer nothing new in their electronic form but Trivial Pursuit has a very strong case for conversion. Questions can be posed using graphics or sound - something that is impossible with a set of dog-eared cards. Triv is not necessarily an improvement on the original but a step in a different direction, nearly - but not quite - as good as the boardgame.

RATING: 67%

BART SIMPSON VS THE SPACE MUTANTS

The Hit Squad £7.99





The Simpsons, eh? Considering that the TV show is only available to those viewers lucky (?) enough to possess a SKY receiver, The Simpsons have managed to weedle their way into the nation's consciousness remarkably quickly. And as Simpson Mania continues to grow unabated, this re-release couldn't be more timely.

Converted from an original console game (ugh!) it's basically a platform adventure based around everyone's favourite underachiever, Bart. The ludicrous story involves a bunch of smelly space aliens

... continued

CHEAPOS!

continued...

BART SIMPSON VS THE SPACE MUTANTS

and their quest to take over the planet. Only Bart is aware of this cunning plan and so he takes it upon himself to save the planet and generally become the hero. Why he can be bothered with all this when he never even does his homework is not explained so it's probably best if we don't ponder upon this point for too long and move on swiftly to the basic gameplay and all that sort of stuff.

As Bart, the player is guided through a series of platform-strewn levels, with a set task to achieve on each before progress to the next is allowed. On the first level, for instance, Bart has to change the colour of any purple objects (this is exactly the type of thing which the Space Mutants need to take control of the planet, you see) and this can be achieved by covering them up, respraying them or all manner of other tricks which become apparent during the game.

Although initially doing a damn good impersonation of a creaky old 8-bit game, subtleties are soon revealed and little touches (like the 'They Live'-type X-ray specs used to detect disguised aliens) make the game slightly more involving to play. As you can see, the graphics aren't exactly award-winning by any means but they do bear a good resemblance to all the gang and the bright, bold visuals give the game a 'cheery' feel. The gameplay itself is a touch linear for my liking, not really offering anything new or original enough to take people by surprise but just plodding along, content to remain fairly average.

Overall the game isn't really substantial enough to warrant its original pricetag but at its new budget price The Simpsons is a worthy purchase if you're a fan of the cartoon family or fancy a no-frills, mildly-entertaining platform romp.

RATING: 65%





SUPER MONACO GRAND PRIX

Kixx £9.99

SMGP is the official conversion of the Sega coin-op of the same name, with a few minor changes. The arcade machine contained only one course (which is quite limiting) and, understandably, the conversion team decided to beef-up the computer version and chuck in an extra three tracks, with access to Monaco only granted when successful qualification from the previous tracks is achieved.

The game is a sprite-based racer with fast-moving and sufficiently smooth-scrolling graphics streaking past at an impressive rate of knots. The car has three sensitivity options, so there should be a control system that 'feels right' for just about any armchair Mansell. Steering is, initially, quite tricky and it soon becomes obvious that the only chance of making it to Monaco is to learn each course. If Super Monaco does have a fault it's that it's very unforgiving - take one bend too fast and it's ogling at the attractive lady in the swimsuit on the 'Game Over' screen for you, my boy. With a little care and loving, though, the car can be goaded around the track as if it were on rails.

As you play, a limit is set on the position you can fall back to in the race and once this is broken the race is over. This placing is adjusted during the race according to how you're doing so if you zoom off right at the start, the chances are you'll be trying to avoid slipping down to third place before too long. So a tiny hint of strategy is called for and it is best to pace yourself early on with a beady eye fixed on the rear-view mirror.

Although it's certainly not the best sprite-racer around (and its age is beginning to show a little now), it really is blummin' great fun and provides quite a long-term challenge. I really do like this game - I always have done - and at this price you'd need to be completely off your so-called trolley to let this purchasing opportunity by and miss your chance of owning one of the finer racing games for the Amiga.

RATING: 85%





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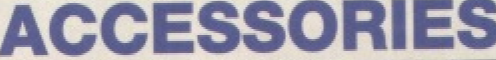
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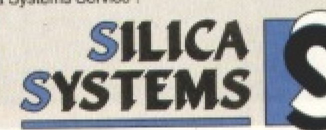
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Previews

Brrrr! It's getting dark earlier and that traditional English chill is creeping back into the air. It can only be November, month of pre-Christmas excitement and the software houses' annual rush to get their festive biggies finished in time. So, while everyone else beetles round like a maniac, why not relax and take a few minutes to peruse some of the goodies coming your way over the next few months. No need to run and hide, it's a wonderful, wonderful life...

UNIVERSAL MONSTERS

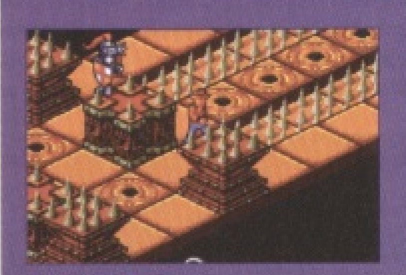
Ocean

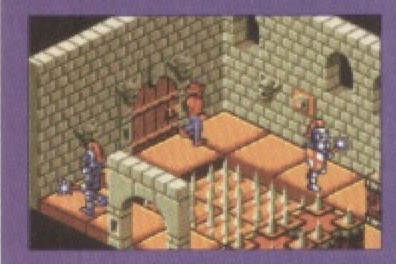
This one is a duistinctly odd licence - instead of signing up any particular film or character, Ocean has picked up the rights to use no less than SIX of the classic bad guys from Universal Studios horror classics of yesteryear in this, its latest arcade adventure.

The sextet of gory characters are made up of Frankenstein's Monster, Dracula, the Wolfman, the Mummy, the Bride of Frankenstein and the Creature from the Black Lagoon. The rudimentary storyline goes that, after the death of veteran vampire-killer Profssor Van Helsing, the spirits of the creatures that he did away with in the course of his colourful career have been re-incarnated and now roam the halls and corridors of a creepy castle. The player, as Van Helsing's nephew Alex, has to go in and recover the six pieces of a shattered gem, the Bloodstar, which when rejoined will condemn the baddies to the spirit world once and for all.



Fans of that clolourful Ocean classic Head Over Heels should be jumping for joy over the release of this - it's another game in the mould of the aging favourite, using 3D isometric graphics to portray the action, and also adding another dimension to the castle's myriad of puzzles. And of course, expect plenty of gory graphics and atmospheric muzak. The emphasis is more on the adventure side than action - although there are platforms to jump and baddies to avoid, much of the game revolved around finding the right objects to help you progress. Each of the six monsters can only be banished with the aid of a special object (a Crucifix in the case of Dracula, for instance), so you'd better go out and stock up on graph paper now - this one's going to take a lot of mapping, and as such should receive a warm welcome from 'serious' arcade adventurers, who have been starved of a decent diet for ages. And with Francis Ford Coppola's Dracula movie due out soon, Ocean's obviously counting on a big hit. Hopefully it'll be out and about before the end of the year - keep 'em peeled.







CREATURES Thalamus

Having whipped up a storm on the Commodore 64 (remember those?) in 1990 with a rather impressive nine months in the Top 20, Thalamus' entry into the increasingly-turbulent platform game arena is at last nearing completion on the Amiga. In Clyde Radcliffe Exterminates All The Unfriendly Earth-ridden Slime (CREATURES is an acronym, you see), the player IS the super-cute Clyde, whose job it is to rescue a race of fuzzy-wuzzy aliens who have crash-landed on a remote island on Earth, and now risk horrible torture and death at the hands of its nasty inhabitants.

What follows is six stages of horizontally-scrolling platform fun (or so we're promised), interspersed by three special torture screens, each one a puzzle that involves the player setting off a Mousetrap-style chain reaction to free a captured creature from being butchered by a chainsaw-weilding baddy. As he does so, Clyde's only weapon is his atrocious bad breath, which is so bad it shoots out a jet of fire (who writes this stuff?), but he can power himself up by collecting MPCs (Magic Potion Creatures) from around the levels and cashing them in at the buxom witch's end-of-level hut.



Converted from the C64 original by ex-Psygnosis coder Wayne Smithson (he of Baal and Ork fame), CREATURES is expected on Amiga next month. And we're promised that the sequel, subtitled Clyde Radcliffe In Torture Trouble and currently topping the 8-bit charts, will follow very shortly after, perhaps even before the end of the year.

NICK FALDO'S GOLF

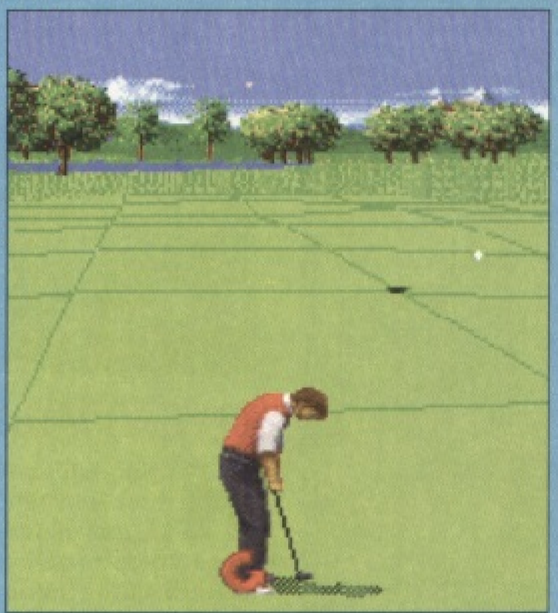
Grandslam

While he's not out earning a fortune on the courses of the world or telling us what a really smooth shave you get with a disposable Bic, Nick Faldo must be at a bit of a loose end. So what better way to fill in the time between tournaments than lending your name to a computer golf game? It's not the first time he's done it, having attached his moniker to a rather tatty Spectrum golf sim nearly a decade ago. This second game to carry his name, however, looks to be a good deal more sophisticated - and it'll need to be, going up against such stiff competition as the excellent PGA Tour Golf, Microprose Golf and Links.

Opting more for the straightforward approach of PGA rather than the depthier, simulation-based style adopted by Links and 'Prose's effort, Nick Faldo's Championship Golf promises to be, in Grandslam's own words "easy to play yet difficult to master." We may have heard all that before, but all the same the list of the game's features is impressive to say the least. The filled vector courses (two in the main game, with data disks to follow) have been created using Arc Developments' new Reality3 graphics system, which allows for plenty of pretty shading and undulation effects, and the golfers themselves are drawn and animated from digitised images of the real thing. Selectable caddies offer advice, and there's a separate training section based on Faldo's own instructional videos. A modem link allows for simultaneous two-player games, while lonely sorts can choose between eight computer opponents of varying ability.

The rest is pretty much what you'd expect - all the usual clubs, course maps, SAVEable player stats, a driving range and practice green, seasonal weather conditions, Stroke and Matchplay options... the list goes on and on. It's looking like NFCG could be the most comprehensive golf game yet. Whether it'll prove to be the most playable is something you'll have to wait 'til next month to find out.





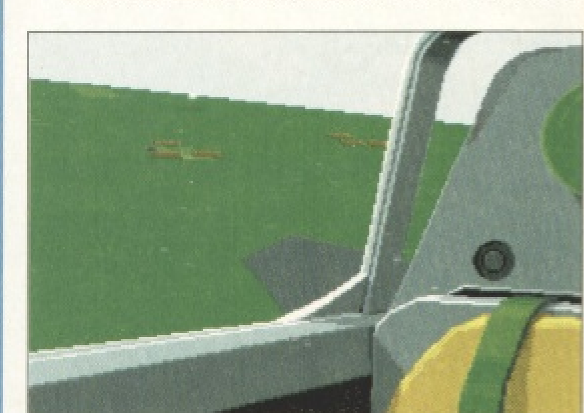
REACH FOR THE SKIES

Virgin

The demise of Mirrorsoft last year led to countless games falling by the wayside mid-development - some got picked up by other software houses, others are still stranded in programming Hell. Rowan Software's Reach for the Skies is one of the lucky ones, having found a new home at Virgin and at long last set for release this Autumn. It's hardly surprising that the long-awaited aerial combat simulation based around the Battle of Britain has been in development for almost as long as anyone here can remember.

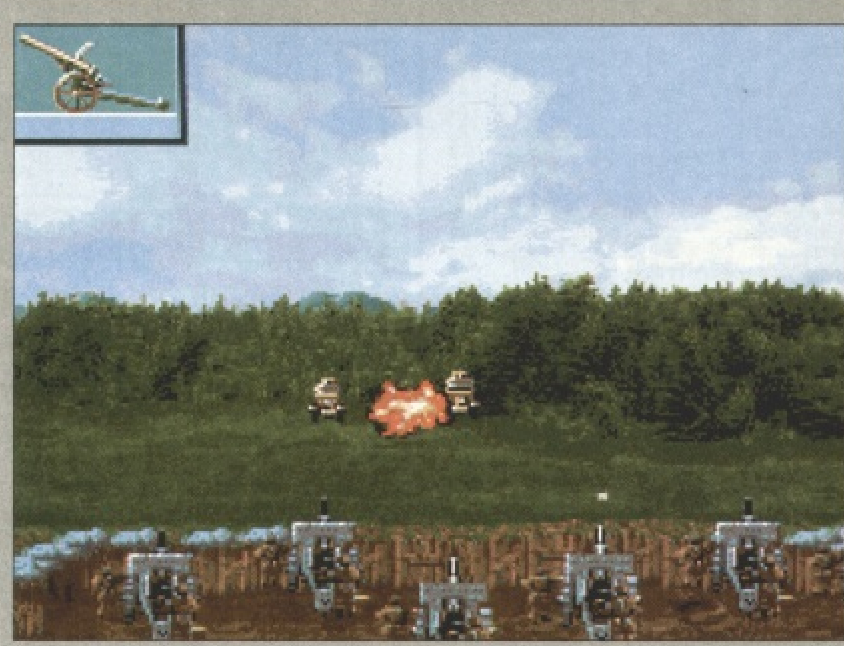
The game's promising to be a historically accurate portrayal of the Battle of Britain and the campaigns leading up to it - the dates of battles are all correct, and the dogfighting tactics employed by the German fighters have been modelled on the real thing too. Players can go all-out for action as a pilot or sit back and play a strategic role as controller, organising an entire campaign including the production and distribution of aircraft. Those who crave a mega challenge can do both, making tactical decisions on the ground then flying the missions that will bring your plans into effect.

Aside from the usual, Reach for the Skies has









HISTORYLINE 1914-1918 Blue Byte

From the Second World War to the First, with a game that should bring a smile to the face of any Battle Isle fans out there. After the not inconsiderable (and, let's face it, somewhat surprising) success of Blue Byte's futuristic strategy epic, the German development team has taken the same formula and applied it to a detailed strategic reconstruction of The War To End All Wars. The new setting has meant a lot more work for the designers, who have had to feed in a tremendous amount of technical and historical research data - relative size of forces, when equipment became available etc. The result, it is hoped, will be a Strategy Game To End All Strategy Games, and one that should be particularly welcomed by hard-core wargame purists.

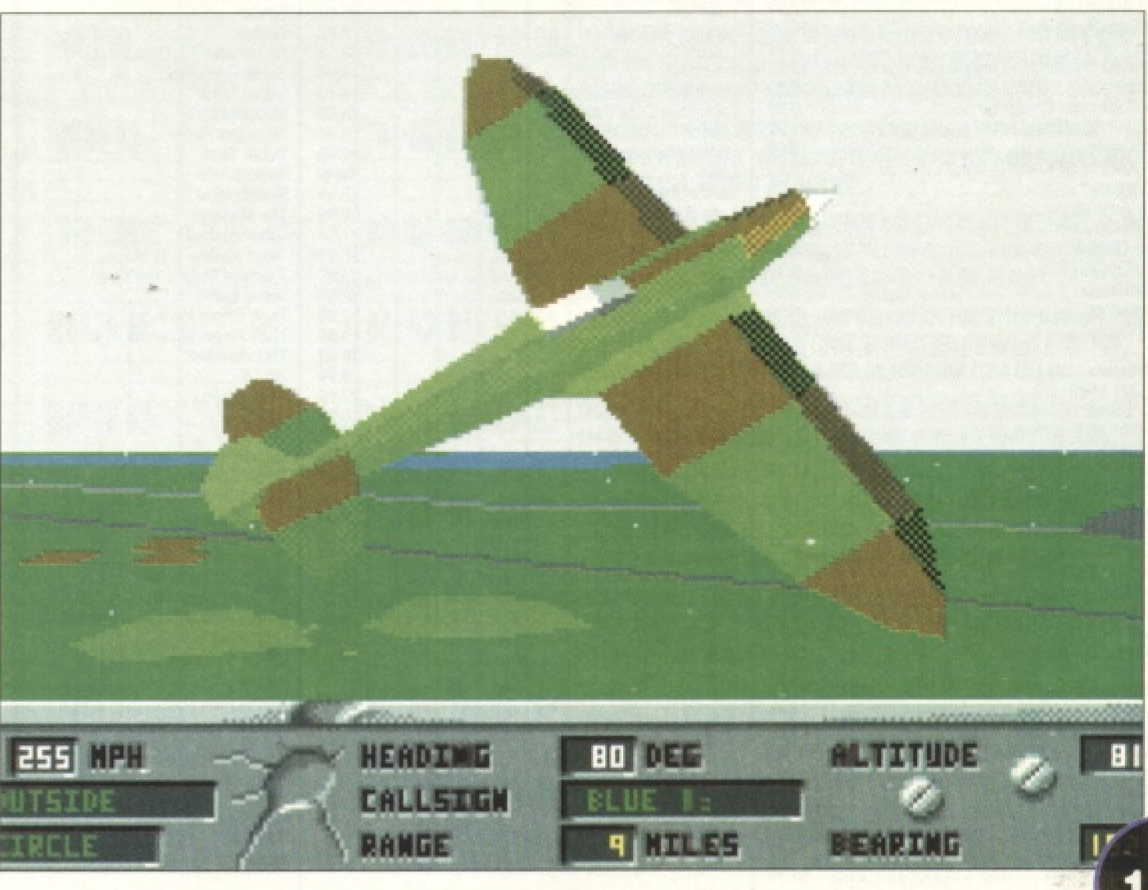


The main thrust of the game is played out on the split-screen hexagon board that all Battle Isle fans have come to know and love, while individual battles are played out in swish graphical interludes which, we're told, use the same advanced 3D sprite-scaling techniques used by the likes of Wing Commander. Air, land and sea forces (over fifty types of vehicle and armoured unit) are all the player's disposal, with varying terrain and weather conditions doing their bit to hamper each side's progress.

The ten-man Blue Byte team has been working on Historyline for the last year and, we must admit, it's very sporting of the Germans to go to all this effort to reconstruct a war that they eventually lost. Perhaps the series should be taken to its logical conclusion with a football simulation called Historyline 1966. Now that WOULD be worth waiting for...

a couple of nice touches that should help lift it above the current pack of historical sims. Players can fly either for the British or Germans, which should make for two very different games (the British role is fighter defence, while the Germans must try to bomb as much English soil as possible) and - an interesting one this - you can 'jump' from plane to plane in the heat of the action, taking controls of any aircraft at any time with just the press of a key. Will it work? Can Rowan, who did such good work on Falcon and Flight of the Intruder, keep enough planes in the air at a fast enough speed to recreate the Battle of Britain realistically? Will Shane finally discover the identity of his real father? All this and more... next issue.





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GAMES INDEX

A severely truncated Index intro this month, I'm afraid! So much good stuff to squeeze into the mag, you see, and something just had to give. At least there's still space enough for the usual Compo with the usual great software prize for the lucky reader plucked from the bag on the closing date of November 21st. And the quezzy is... How many games has Gremlin got in this month's Index? Write the answer down on a postcard and send it Games Index Compo 7 at the usual address. Good luck!

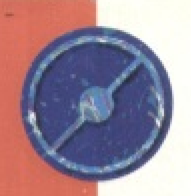
GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	MEMORY	ISSUE REVIEWED	ISSUE TIPPED	SCORES %: GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LASTABILITY	OVERALL	THE VERDICT
A320 AIRBUS	THALION	1MB	JAN 92	--	78	55	N/A	92	87	This is not a game. This is a flight simulator. Those of you who find the idea of a truly accurate simulation of flying an A320 Airbus will find it enjoyable. Those of you who don't, most certainly will not.
4D SPORTS DRIVING	MINDSCAPE	1MB	MARCH 92	--	92	78	78	81	78	Mindscape's rival to Hard Driving is a bit of a game for Tetal-heads, completely full of car acceleration data and all that. Slow graphics are almost made up for with smart action replay feature and ker-razy computerised drivers to race against.
THE ADDAMS FAMILY	OCEAN	512K	JUNE 92	AUG-OCT 92	90	89	87	86	90	Help Gomez locate the missing members of his family by scouring the increasingly kooky spooky etc rooms in the Addams mansion. Excellent platform fare very much in the Mario/Sonic vein. Slick graphics. Loads of secret rooms
APIDYA	PLAY BYTE	512K	MAY 92	--	74	85	84	80	79	Straight back to the bad old days when Psynosis games looked smart but had very little depth. This time the player must guide the Psygnosis owl, no less, through a number of stages of shoot-out action etc, etc. Nice power-up system, but that's it.
AQUA VENTURA	PSYGNOSIS	512K	AUG 92	--	72	65	77	60	75	A 3D shoot-'em-up viewed with an interesting 'chaser plane' player view. Not half as good as Simulcra, which it closely resembles, you'd think Psyggy could come up with something a bit better after four years in development Hell.
THE AQUATIC GAMES	MILLENNIUM	512K	OCT 92	--	87	83	82	80	84	Harking back to the days of Konami's Track and Field and Hypersports coin-ops, this - the latest outing for James Pond - is a whacky sports sim where success depends largely on your joystick waggling skills. Although simplistic, it's lots of fun and often very funny.
A. MACLEAN'S POOL	VIRGIN GAMES	512K	OCT 92	--	87	78	90	90	90	Imagine Jimmy White's with a smaller table, fewer balls and simpler rules and you've pretty much got Pool. Snooker owners may balk at forking out for what seems like more of the same, but Pool's greater accessibility make it a more instantly enjoyable experience.
ASHES OF EMPIRE	MIRAGE	1MB	JUNE 92	--	74	85	84	80	80	Another epic from Mike Singleton. This time, it's your mission to sort out all of the problems of an alternative Eastern Europe by talking to characters with multiple choice menus. Lots of 3D & fractals. The usual stuff.
BEAST 3	PSYGNOSIS	1MB	SEPT 92	--	94	81	90	89	90	The first game was too easy and simple and the second was too hard and obscure, but with Beast 3 the games gurus at Psyggy have got the blend just right. A well-smart blend of beat-'em platform action and puzzle solving. Beast 3 is a winner all round.
BIG RUN	STORM	512K	MARCH 92	--	67	83	67	64	65	My word. If you thought Big Run was a less than excellent game in the arcades, you should see this! Slightly worse than Outrun Europa. 3D sprites chugging through a terminally uninteresting desert (Paris to Dakar in fact). Not quite as bad as the SNES one.
BLACK CRYPT	ELECTRONIC ARTS	1MB	MARCH 92	--	93	88	91	92	92	Yup, it's yet another Dungeon Master clone, but to be fair, it's better than most. Regular RPG hit-point business but with some above average monsters to conquer and an excellent user interface. Friendly and fun.
BUG BOMBER	D.M.I.	512K	AUG 92	--	53	50	81	76	81	Fundamentally a Dynablaster clone, this 'improves' on the Ubi Soft game by adding advanced weapons and power ups. However, these only serve to clutter the addictive simplicity of the underlying gameplay. Cautiously recommended, all the same.
CALI. GAMES 2	US GOLD	1MB	AUG 92	--	70	74	68	60	68	An obvious PC port (just look at that colour scheme!), this does a total disservice to the memory of the original. It's patchy and disappointing - a tiny handful of the events are decent fun, the rest are dross.
CASTLE OF DR BRAIN	SIERRA	1MB	SEPT 92	--	82	65	71	78	75	Although as plagued by rampant disk accessing as all the other Sierra games, this actually doesn't spoil Dr Brain (a semi-adventure based around a series of logic puzzles and mind games) too much, as it gives the brain a chance to cool between conundrums. Likeable fun.
CATCH 'EM	D.M.I.	512K	AUG 92	--	48	50	20	40	25	Oh my goodness, what have we here? A good idea (jump around the platforms and catch the escaped zoo animals) is killed by shockingly low playability. You thought inescapable 'death loops' were a thing of the past? Think again...

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	MEMORY	ISSUE REVIEWED	ISSUE TIPPED	SCORES % GRAPHICS	SOUND	PLAYABILITY	LASTABILITY	OVERALL	THE VERDICT
CH. MANAGER	DOMARK	1MB	JULY 92	--	60	78	90	92	89	Absolutely marvelous management sim, and by far the better half of Domark's attempted double with European Football Champ. No interactive training, but flawless on every other score.
CIVILIZATION	MICROPROSE	1MB	AUG 92	SEPT 92	60	55	82	90	81	Sid Meier, the King of Strategy, is back with a game that sets the player the task of building their own 'Civilization', founding cities, developing weapons, discovering scientific theories, etc. Big, bold and brilliant, if a bit ugly.
CRAZY CARS 3	TITUS	512K	AUG 92	--	83	82	89	88	90	Whatever you do, don't be put off by this game's pedigree, 'cos it's is up there with Lotus 2 and Jaguar. Imagine Cannonball Run - race for money and outwit the cops - on the Amiga and ten times as much fun and you'll get some idea of what this game is like.
CRAZY SEASONS	IDEA	512K	SEPT 92	--	65	62	76	56	70	In this Italian platformer, you control a penguin-like alien as it tries to arrange errant time capsules into their correct configuration while avoiding the strange meanies. Crazy? Yes. Good? Not really.
D/GENERATION	MINDSCAPE	512K	JULY 92	--	60	78	90	92	89	Certainly not one of the hottest looking games of the moment, but what a player! Guide your hero around a booby-trapped complex, rescuing scientists and avoiding the traps. Simple and excellent. Good variety of puzzles.
DELIVERANCE	21st CENTURY	512K	MAY 92	--	80	78	81	74	81	It looks like Gods, it plays like Gods, but it's better than Gods. Yes, this arcade romp, we feel, has even more enjoyable moments than the Bitmap Bros' finest. And it's not quite the rip-off of the original that it first appears. Well worth a look.
DUNE	VIRGIN	1MB	JUNE 92	OCT 92	90	82	88	90	90	Excellent computer version of top sci-fi book'n'movie. You must sort our the dodgy spice-mining businesses on the desert planet Arrakis. Lovely graphics, super plot, but a bit of an advanced game which may be too much for beginners to deal with.
DYNABLASTER	UBISOFT	512K	MARCH 92	--	75	60	83	90	87	As a one player game it's pretty good. As a two player game it's even better. But with up to four players (thanks to a protection dongle thing) it's unbelievable! The aim is to clear screens of cute baddies with bombs - but not to blow up yourself. Better than it sounds.
ELVIRA 2	ACCOLADE	512K	APRIL 92	--	88	67	86	74	77	Anyone who has played the first Elvira game will be pretty much at home in this installment. It's a standard click-on-the-icons adventure with added spice added by the lovely Ms Elvira herself. Not much instant gratification, but long-lasting.
ESPANA: GAMES '92	OCEAN	1MB	SEPT 92	--	51	55	60	67	59	Ocean's competitor in the All-Comers' Olympics tie-in is a rank outsider. Bearing all the hallmarks of a hasty PC port (endless disk-swapping and accessing and blandly-offensive colour scheme), this simplistic waggler/management game should be left on the blocks.
EURO FOOTBALL CH.	DOMARK	512K	JULY 92	--	70	68	69	68	69	Highly simplistic footy coin-op comes to the Amiga. Two evenly matched but hopelessly incapable teams slug it out. Okay in two player mode, pretty bad for one player. Pretty okay looking, but marred by oddities, suicidal goalies etc.
EYE O. T. BEHOLDER 2	US GOLD	1MB	MAY 92	OCT 92 - ??	94	78	89	90	87	Very much a case of the same again. Bigger and better than before, but still bearing some problems. There's no help option to get you out of tough spots, and not really much originality. But you pays your money and you takes your choc ice.
FASCINATION	DIGITAL INTEGRATION	512K	SEPT 92	--	72	65	59	69	62	Oh, these oh-so-risque Frenchies! A saucy graphic adventure packed with not over-titillating graphics of moody ladies, this can only be recommended to sad cases so desperate for the sight of the naked female form that they'll get excited over a few pixels.
FIRE & ICE	RENEGADE	512K	MAY 92	AUG & SEPT 92	91	88	90	92	92	An impressive outing from the boy Braybrook. This is his first all-Amiga game, and the tricks and twists he has employed to achieve some super-smart effects are just breathtaking. Superb arcade romp.
FIREFORCE	I.C.E.	512K	OCT 92	--	74	80	90	88	90	Basically a 90s version of the ancient Greem Beret coin-op, this horizontally-scrolling slash-'em-up boasts graphic gore, a variety of guns to fire and a small strategy element to keep the ol' grey matter ticking over. Shame about the ST-ish graphics, though.
FLOOR 13	VIRGIN	1MB	JUNE 92	--	83	--	78	92	86	Gripping simulation of the murkiest and dirtiest government undercover work. Wire taps and smear campaigns, hit squads etc. All in the name of public security. Super-stylish and therefore not to everyone's tastes.
G-LOC	US GOLD	512K	JUNE 92	--	82	62	87	43	76	It certainly isn't going to keep you going for months, but G-LOC will make the hours when you are playing it simply race by. Top blasting action, and probably one of US Gold's best coin up conversions ever. A nice change from Line of Fire & ESWAT.
GLOBAL EFFECT	MILLENIUM	1MB	MAY 92	--	69	52	65	71	70	A sort of cross between Utopia and Sim Earth, Global effect has a green theme and a wargame element, but somehow just doesn't hold together as well as it might. Okay for an entry to this style of game, but that's about it.
GOBLIIINS	DREAM FACTORY	512K	AUG 92	--	68	55	66	70	63	There are these three Goblins, right, and they've got to travel through a series of screens, solving puzzles as they go, to find a serum to cure their sick King. Unfortunately the puzzle solutions are illogical to the point of absurdity, making the game hugely frustrating to play.
GRAHAM TAYLOR	KRISALIS	1MB	JULY 92	SEPT 92	82	76	89	89	89	Despite recent misfortunes, Mr Taylor has contrived to inveigle himself in something of a success story, endorsing one of the finest management games around. Apart from anything else, the authenticity, with real-life data for stacks os players, is most impressive.



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GUY SPY	EMPIRE	512K	SEPT 92	--	70	68	59	49	55	After all the hype that this would prove that Readysoft really CAN write games with playability, Guy Spy disappoints. It's a marginal improvement on the likes of Space Ace (you have some freedom) but not much. Even the graphics don't seem up to scratch.
HARPOON	ELECTRONIC ARTS	512K	MARCH 92	--	40	42	83	85	84	Anyone who owns one of the Harpoon games will know exactly what to expect. In fact, this add-on disk is perhaps a little too similar to what has gone before for many tastes. Accurate as hell, but still looks like a dog's dinner.
HOI	HOLLYWARE	512K	AUG 92	--	89	84	90	86	90	From straight out of the blue comes this little gem. It's a super-cute platform jobby set over five massive levels. It's not amazingly sophisticated but it's wonderfully playable and constantly surprising. Deserves to be a big, big hit.
HOOK	OCEAN	1MB	JULY 92	--	89	91	82	65	82	Impressive first stab from a major UK software house to emulate the Lucasfilm style of graphic adventure. The biggest problem with Hook's mission to rescue his children and rediscover his own innocence, is that it's simple too short.
HOSTILE BREED	PALACE	512K	JUNE 92	--	55	70	70	85	75	A cross between a shoot-'em-up and a resource management game. An earthquake has ruptured the outer wall of your space complex and horrible bugs are getting in. Repel the bugs and mend the holes, but don't let the generator overheat. Over complex.
THE HUMANS	MIRAGE	512K	OCT 92	--	85	80	79	82	80	An arcade puzzle game based around whacky cavemen, The Humans, although enjoyable, doesn't even come close to stealing the Lemmings' crown as king of the genre. The game's pace is too sedate, the humour forced and the game tasks ultimately repetitive.
INDIANA JONES 4	US GOLD	1MB	MAY 92	--	83	70	85	80	82	Isometric mix of action and puzzling. Doesn't start especially grippingly, but soon turns into a fan that even Indy himself would take his hat off to! Some interesting character-swapping potential available for exploration too.
INDY HEAT	STORM	512K	MARCH 92	--	87	89	88	79	86	After the dreadful Big Run, anyone could be forgiven for thinking that Storm are not exactly the most reliable purveyors of good driving games. This Super-Sprint clone dashes those fears, as it's great. The best top-down racer since Off Road from Virgin.
INT. SPORTS CHALL.	EMPIRE	512K	AUG 92	--	76	79	81	85	88	Puff and pant your way through dozens of Olympics-style events. It's all been well tought out. Success is down to the player's skill rather than how fast they can waggle a joystick, making it very rewarding to play.
ISHAR	SILMARILS	512K	JULY 92	--	91	84	85	90	87	Though much more a graphic adventure than an RPG, Ishar is sure to appeal, thanks to it's immense lastability alone, to Eye of the Beholder fans (and everyone else with half a brain, for that matter).
JAGUAR XJ220	CORE DESIGN	1MB	JUNE 92	--	84	79	86	79	85	Lotus 2 only better and with Jags in.Many tracks and a round-the-world race season theme thrown in for good measure. Lovely presentation, fast update, Oh, and a course designer too. But would you use it?
JIM POWER	LORICIEL	512K	JUNE 92	--	90	82	86	81	84	It's like an arcade in your own home, or something. Left-to-right scrolling blast-em-up action. Out here Mr Power must clean up tha galaxy using his excellent weapons. Garish/colourful graphics and plenty of blasting.
J. BARNES FOOTBALL	KRISALIS	1MB	MAY 92	--	77	80	80	76	80	Excellent, though slightly slower than Kick Off 2, John Barnes is still 30% quicker than Man. Utd Europe, but sufficiently similar to the first game for fans not to feel all at sea. Two player mode is especially satisfying.
KID GLOVES 2	MILLENIUM	512K	MARCH 92	--	63	70	64	68	65	Following up the surprise success of Robocod with another side-on arcade adventure wasn't the best move Millenium could have made, especially since this particular example of the genre is rubbish. Looks okay but won't last long. Shame.
LEGEND	MINDSCAPE	512K	JUNE 92	--	74	85	84	80	79	It may still be the same old bullshit storyline, but at least Legend does absolutely everything with a degree of flair. Rid Trazers from evil monsters using your RPG skill. Nice graphics and refreshingly little fiddling around in combat.
LEISURESUIT LARRY 5	SIERRA	1MB	MARCH 92	--	78	42	68	88	50	He may be a funny fella on the PC with lots of hard-memory, but on the Amiga he's more of a farce. Sierra's 'adult' adventures of Lounge lizard Larry may be okay, but until they sort their disk-access, the joke's on them.
LIVERPOOL	GRANDSLAM	1MB	AUG 92	--	64	70	70	65	74	Liverpool initially seems to offer just about everything the footy fan could ever want . However, apart from a nifty Striker-ish 3D view, it's all very disappointing. Passing is difficult and the game often ends up feeling like Pinball on a football pitch.
LOTUS III	GREMLIN	512K	OCT 92	--	88	86	80	88	86	Taking all the best bits from Lotus 1 and 2, Lotus 3 is the sum of its parts - nothing more, nothing less. Although the best Lotus yet, there's an intense (and perhaps inevitable) sense of deja vu which even the clever track designer included can't dispell.
LURE O. T. TEMPTRESS	VIRGIN GAMES	1MB	JULY 92	OCT 92	89	86	88	88	90	Very good, British-made adventure, set in a medieval world. No icons or text; entirely menu driven. Incorporates hyped (and quite good) Virtual Theatre, where characters 'go about their own business' regardless of your actions. No, really.
THE MANAGER	US GOLD	512K	MARCH 92	--	65	62	75	72	75	You've seen one footy management game and you've seen them all, right? Well, yes. You have. Better presentation but no chance to actually control the player on the pitch. It needs a real fan of the genre to invest in just another version of a ten-year old

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										game.
MATCH OF THE DAY	ZEPPELIN	512K	OCT 92	--	60	55	81	70	66	The official licence of the Beeb's classic footy show, MOTD proves to be an entertaining albeit simplistic footy management sim. The decent presentation and easy-to-use control interface make this a good introduction to the genre.
MEGATRAVELLER 2	EMPIRE	1MB	SEPT 92	--	53	60	49	90	57	Somewhere inside MegaTraveller 2 there's a rich, diverse and exciting universe of adventure waiting to be discovered. However, any attempts to find it are crippled by unbelievably frequent disk accessing and slip-shod game design. A tragedy.
MONKEY ISLAND 2	US GOLD	1MB	JULY 92	AUG-OCT 92	94	76	89	95	94	More of the same, only miles better. This time the graphics have been improved ten-fold and the humour is simply excellent. David Upchurch virtually blew a gasket over its skillfulness.
MYTH	SYSTEM 3	1MB	APRIL 92	--	94	92	93	93	93	The game which was such a hit on 8-bit for the Pinner-based company finally comes to the Amiga. Excellent graphics and some smart gameplay puts this well above the run of the mill hack-n'-slash arcade adventures.
NOVA 9	SIERRA	1MB	OCT 92	--	69	56	54	60	59	Looks absolutely luverly on the back of the box, but the sad thing is that the actual 3D during the game moves little faster than the packaging screenshots. A great pity because it looks like there's a decent game in there somewhere.
ORK	PSYGNOSIS	512K	JUNE 92	--	68	56	71	79	64	Another shoot-'em-up from the Psygnosis stable. Or should that be factory? Nice scrolling backgrounds, average graphics, similar sound effects and nothing new anywhere in sight. Very competent. Not very imaginative.
PACIFIC ISLANDS	EMPIRE	512K	MAY 92	--	56	58	65	70	69	This sequel to the well-loved Team Yankee was loved my just about everyone but us. They appluaded the game's undeniable depth and strategic merit, while we bitched about its blocky graphics and boring money management aspect. Horses for courses etc.
PARASOL STARS	OCEAN	512K	APRIL 92	JULY 92	91	90	80	80	82	Bub and Bob may well be back, but they're not back with quite the same style that they had in Rainbow Islands. In a fantastically colourful platform romp, our heroes must brolly their way to success. Smart graphics but not quite as good as the topper Rainbow.
PINBALL DREAMS	21st CENTURY	512K	APRIL 92	--	90	91	90	80	89	Even though we find it rather hard to see the point of pinball simulators, we have to say that this is a more enjoyable experience than most. This is partly down to the two-screen tables and also their variety from rocket-launches to creepy graveyards. Ooer.
PLAN 9	GREMLIN	1MB	MAY 92	--	74	85	84	80	79	The film was hilariously bad, so the game is going to be... It's a bit of a foregone conclusion that Plan 9 is hardly the best adventure in the world. Too few locations and too linear a plot make this a downright trudge.
PREMIERE	CORE DESIGN	1MB	SEPT 92	--	82	88	80	80	81	A not-overly-complicated platformer lifted out of the league of also-rans by some superbly drawn and animated graphics and imaginative end-of-level meanies. No classic, by any means, but a more than worthy purchase none-the-less.
PROJECT-X	TEAM 17	1MB	MAY 92	--	90	90	90	88	90	Quite simply, the best shoot-'em-up to appear on the Amiga in ages. Wage war against mechanoid insects with an awesome arsenal of inventice weapons. Super smooth scrolling, highly polished high-octane action. Excellent.
PSYBORG	LORICIELS	512K	MAY 92	--	62	55	64	58	60	Set across eight solar systems and forty planets, this weird tale of space blasting did little to impress us. Race down the 3D corridors, spinning around to keep to the safe parts of the 'floor'. Okay graphics, but very short lived.
PUSHOVER	OCEAN	512K	JUNE 92	--	85	82	83	79	83	Knock down the dominoes in the right order to progress to the next level. Doesn't sound like much of a game does it? Well, it is. And a good one at that. Plenty of special domino-properties to learn and use and some cute graphics too. Worth a look.
PUTTY	SYSTEM 3	1MB	OCT 92	--	84	92	82	80	87	One of the most original and - Wizkid aside - funny games to have appeared in a long, long time, Putty is a platform game starring an amazingly flexible hero. With its beautiful graphics, amazing sampled sound and superb playability, Putty is a treat all-round.
RACE DRIVIN'	DOMARK	512K	APRIL 92	--	82	80	86	84	85	A surprisingly playable conversion of a most enjoyable coin-op. Although it doesn't really offer much that Hard Drivin' didn't, it's a thoroughly worthwhile purchase, 'cos at the very least, it's slightly faster.
RED ZONE	PSYGNOSIS	1MB	AUG 92	--	82	85	89	80	87	A sort of a F1GP for the bike enthusiast, Red Zone sacrifices massive attention-to-detail for speed and is arguably the more immediately enjoyable of the two games for it. If you hunger for high-speed thrills then this is the game for you.
RISKY WOODS	ELECTRONIC ARTS	512K	JULY 92	--	86	89	88	84	84	Not exactly the most graphically-polished game in the world, but a good old kicking rollock none-the-less. It's an impressive comeback for those Spanish coders Dynamic and it's also a lot less frustratingly difficult than their games used to be.
SENSIBLE SOCCER	RENEGADE	1MB	JUNE 92	AUG 92	88	86	94	93	93	Actually better than Kick Off 2? Yes. Hard to believe, but true. The boys at Sensible have triumphed to bring a game so playable, it's almost impossible to imagine. Rush down to the shops and buy a copy immediately.
SHADOWLANDS	DOMARK	1MB	MARCH 92	JUNE 92	93	88	93	90	93	Now this is what role playing games should be like. The first outing of the excellent Photoscape system is a true success as this above average role playing romp is elevated



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SHUTTLE	VIRGIN GAMES	1MB	OCT 92	--	83	52	70	85	81	to truly praiseworthy status with atmospheric visuals and some real style.
SPACE CRUSADE	GREMLIN	512K	APRIL 92	AUG 92	85	89	90	89	89	Looking for detail? You've come to the right place then, 'cos Shuttle has it by the bucket-load. For most of us it's the closest we'll ever get to piloting the real thing and if it's as daunting as the sim makes it that's just as well. Good stuff - but you've got to work at it.
SPACE GUN	OCEAN	512K	APRIL 92	--	74	79	79	70	75	The sequel to the rather popular Hero Quest, this game offers the player an interesting mix of strategy and isometric-viewed blasting. Although the arcade action is slightly hampered by boring strategy rules, the spacey fight scenes make it worthwhile.
SPACE QUEST IV	SIERRA	1MB	MAY 92	--	52	17	25	44	49	Hardly the most brain-testing game in the world. This Thunderbolt-style face-on blaster requires 0% intelligence but, for a short time, delivers a high percentage of thrills. Shoot shoot and shoot some more. Multi-scrolling and some okay 3D too.
SPOILS OF WAR	INTERNECINE	1MB	JULY 92	--	27	48	45	82	48	A rather unfortunate battle in the continual war between Sierra's mammoth memory-intensive adventures and the Amiga's capacity. None too smart graphics and wonky sound do little to lift this lacklustre affair.
STARUSH	UBI SOFT	512K	JULY 92	--	58	60	64	77	59	Dismal strategy game for "purists". Based on the interesting principal of discovering and developing new worlds, Spoils of War is simply far too unfriendly and poorly presented (just check the graphics mark).
STEEL EMPIRE	EMPIRE	512K	MARCH 92	--	69	70	75	81	75	Barely competent shoot-'em-up with the novel feature of forcing the player to complete each level twice, first from left to right, then from right to left, with a different end of level guardian at each end. Hmm.
STRIKER	RAGE	1MB	JULY 92	AUG 92	82	78	80	76	80	Lots and lots of depth in a game ideal for strategy buffs. It's likely, however, that some will be disappointed that after all the hoo-hah of creating an army of excellent fighting robots, it's not much fun to actually make them fight.
SUPER SKI 2	MICROIDS	512K	MAY 92	--	77	60	75	65	67	Brave and largely successful attempt at doing something new with the soccer genre. Much the same as the others, but with an interesting 3D viewpoint. Slightly let down by imperfect controls.
SUPER TETRIS	MICROPROSE	1MB	AUG 92	--	78	66	88	88	82	A rather good simulation of ski-related antics, but carrying all the bad things about skiing with it. Not enough variety between events, a bit tiring and, on the whole, a bit of a let down. Shame.
SWORD OF HONOUR	D.M.I.	512K	SEPT 92	--	75	61	72	70	77	Nowhere near as good or as addictive as the original, Super Tetris was doomed to, if not fail, then at least disappoint. Much the same game but tarted up with block-destroying bombs and pretty graphics.
TITUS THE FOX	TITUS	512K	APRIL 92	JUN 92	86	89	84	88	87	A Ninja-based beat-'em-up. Mmmm, how refreshing. To be fair this one's not bad but it's not brilliant, either. There's a minor arcade adventure element to give the illusion of depth but essentially this is joystick-mangling material.
TRODDLERS	STORM	512K	OCT 92	--	81	75	84	86	85	A far cry from the wretched little animals that make that awful yowling sound when they're doing unmentionable things by dustbins, Titus the Fox is a cute and excellently presented fellow in a Harlequin-cum-Blues Brothers side-on romp. Roll on the sequel.
TV SPORTS BASEBALL	MINDSCAPE	1MB	JULY 92	--	84	88	89	88	88	Without doubt the best stab yet at a true Lemmings-beater, Troddlers is a game for one or two players with the simple aim of guiding the little geezers of the title around a hazardous landscape to the exit by building blocks. Great fun, Troddlers is highly recommended.
ULTIMA VI	MINDSCAPE	1MB	JUNE 92	--	83	71	77	95	91	Rather splendid arcade style baseball game. Loads better than Domark's similar RBI. Usual excellent TV Sports presentation, stacks of stats and muchos accessibility. All this from the people who brought you It Came From The Desert.
VROOM	LANKHOR	512K	APRIL 92	--	88	90	89	88	89	Absolutely enormous role playing adventure in the land of Lord British. Plenty of disk-swapping and rubbish Old Worlde "English" are but minor annoyances then weighed against the sheer size and excellent of the package.
VIDEO KID	GREMLIN	512K	MARCH 92	--	85	80	80	86	82	After the rigorous detail of Formula One GP this rather super romp is something of a relief. Lots of speed and excellent computer drivers. Polygon graphics and plenty of courses. Overhead maps and all the usual business. But boy, is it quick!
VIKINGS	KRISALIS	1MB	SEPT 92	--	75	N/A	69	80	72	Like Mike TV in Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory , Video Kid just thinks about TV all the time. The result is a crazy side-on scrolling shoot-out through Western, Fantasy, Horror and Gangster scenes. Some iffy controls but competent entertainment.
WILLY BEAMISH	SIERRA	1MB	MARCH 92	--	94	93	83	80	84	Will anyone ever write a game about the Vikings that depicts them as the wenching, beer-swilling boys on the town that they really were? This is a strategy affair with few head-splitting or lager-drinking interludes. Good, solid stuff though some may find it dull.
ZOOL	GREMLIN	1MB	OCT 92	--	87	82	87	85	87	Oh dear. Lovely graphics, bloody laughable disk access. If you've got a hard drive then Willy's teen angst adventure involving his pet frog Horny, har har, may suit you. You may be interested to know that it comes on TWELVE disks. Swapping frolics ahoy!
										Look out Sonic! Yes, Zool's finally here and he's been worth the wait. It's a highly-polish

NEXT MONTH!

THE NEW AMIGA!

It's coming! In its secret research labs Commodore has been beavering away on a new home computer which, it is claimed, will take Amiga gaming into the 21st Century and beyond! Rumours abound about the machine's technical specifications; of high-speed 68030 processors, TV-quality graphics and ear-shattering CD sound. What's truth and what's conjecture? Find out next month when Commodore reveals all...

SWAMPED BY SOFTWARE

You wouldn't believe the reviews we've got lined up for you (God and deadlines willing), but this little sample should whet your appetite...

THE CHAOS ENGINE - The Bitmap Brothers' latest, but will it be their greatest?

INDY IV - Can Lucasfilm possibly top Monkey Island 2?

K.G.B. - Virgin's newy may all be undercover but will it rate over ninety?

GUNSHIP 2000 - We can't wait to see MicroProse's chopper (sim)!

RAMPART - Domark's long-awaited coin-op conversion finally peeks over the wall.

...and maybe even...

STREETFIGHTER 2 - Is it finger-breaking good?

Most normal Amiga mags would be quite happy to call it quits at that but not us! In addition to all this sheer excellence there'll be a wealth of tips, news, interviews, previews and out-of-cockpit views (eh?), all brought to you by the zaniest gang of funsters since the Marx Brothers were at their peak.

THE ONE

December Issue on sale November 21st

WARNING! Reading The One can seriously damage your boredom.


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